seals

of south india

k. ganesh

SEALS OF SOUTH INDIA

K. GANESH

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PREFACE

This book is an earnest attempt to record the seals prevalent in south India from Ancient times to early 20th century A.D. This book records the seals from published sources as well as seals from private collections, which have hitherto not been reported. A book specifically addressing only the south Indian seals has not been published till now. This book will thus serve as a starting point for further research on south Indian seals.

The book is broadly divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the seals. Uninscribed seals are dealt in the second chapter while the third chapter covers the seals on copper plate grants. The fourth chapter is devoted to the inscribed seals. I have also added a section from *Ain-i-Akbari*, which throws light on the seals prevalent during Akbar's time.

I am indebted to Dr. D. Raja Reddy for providing me a copy of his book *Coins of the Satraps of the Satavahana Era* and allowing me to publish the seals reported in the book. I thank Mrs. Saleema Khursheed for helping me in deciphering the seals with Persian legend. I thank V. Raju, Pramod Vernekar and Prakash Seth, for allowing me to report seals from their collections and my daughter Ranjani for taking the photographs of some of the seals. A. Manoharan helped me with line drawings and I thank him for the help.

K. Ganesh

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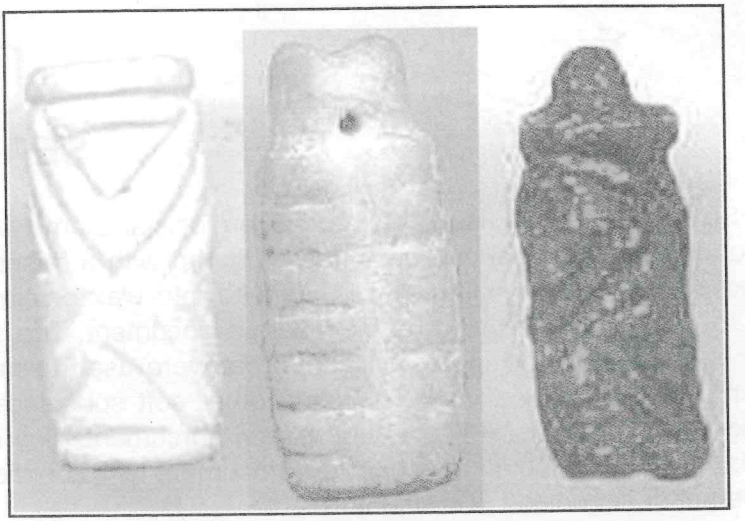
1
SEALS

Seal is a device used to produce an official stamp as a symbol of authority. Seal can be a ring or stamp with a raised or engraved symbol or emblem that is pressed into wax or clay in order to certify a signature or authenticate a document. The seal usually has symbols or figures or letters that were used to make an impression on clay or wax, or some other soft substance. A sealing is an impression of a seal on paper, parchment, clay and wax and capable of being attached to a document to authenticate it, in lieu of or in addition to a signature.

Seal, as a transitive verb, means fastening with a seal to prevent tampering. What is so special about a seal(ing) is that it is a closure for a package or container that must be broken when the package or container is opened and can therefore reveal tampering. The word seal is also used as the generic term to describe the devices used to make such impressions, such as (signet) rings.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines 'seal' as "a device or substance used to join two things together". "Let me unseal the letter", reads a line from King Lear. A 'sealed order' refers to "written instructions not to be opened or read before a specific time". In Julius Caesar, Antony announces, "Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal. To every Roman citizen he gives, to every several man, seventy-five drachmas".

Ancient seals were made of bone, ivory, stone, or wood; and that they had an intaglio design, and were in the form of stamps or cylinder seals. The first can have a very wide range of shapes, and gives single impressions. The second, characteristic of ancient Mesopotamia, is rolled across the surface to yield a frieze of repeat designs. Interestingly, seals were fundamental in the development of writing system and were a status symbol of authority and sometimes accorded talismanic properties.



1.1 Cylindrical seals from Mesopotamia (left), Syria (middle), Armenia (right)

The use of seals to authenticate documents is a practice as old as writing itself. Seals of this nature were applied directly to the face of the document or attached to the document by cords. This helped maintain authenticity by not allowing the reuse of the sealing. If a forger tried to remove the sealing in the first case, it would break. In the other cases, although the forger could remove the sealing intact by ripping the cords from the paper, he'd still have to separate the cords to attach it to another document, which would destroy the sealing as well because the cords had knots tied in them inside the wax seal. Seals were also applied to letters and parcels to indicate whether or not the item had been opened since the seal was applied. Seals were used both to seal the item to prevent tampering, as well as to provide proof that the item was actually from the sender and is not a forgery. To seal a letter, for example, a letter writer would compose the letter, fold it over, pour wax over the joint formed by the top of the page of paper, and then impress a ring, metal stamp, or other device. Governments would often send letters to citizens under the governmental seal for their eyes only.

Seals were used in the earliest civilisations and are of

considerable interest in archaeology. In ancient Mesopotamia seals were engraved on cylinders, which could be rolled to create an impression on clay e.g., as a label on a consignment of trade goods. From Ancient Egypt, seals in the form of signet rings of kings have been found. In the Indus Valley civilisation, rectangular seals were used to label trade goods.

Because it is used to attest the authority of its bearer, the ring has also been seen as a symbol of his power, which is one explanation for its inclusion in the regalia of certain monarchies. After the death of a pope, the smashing of his signet ring is a prescribed act clearing the way for the sedevacancy and subsequent election of a new pope.

Seal engraving is considered a form of calligraphy and seal engravers are artists. Because seals are commissioned by individuals and carved by artists, every seal is unique, and engravers often personalize the seals they create. The material of seal and the style of the engraving are typically matched to the personality of the owner.

Signet rings are made by intaglio engraving, either in metal or gems (generally semiprecious). Agate is a frequent material, especially carnelian or banded agate like sardonyx; the banding makes the impression contrast with the ground. Metal signet rings can also be cast, which is cheaper but yields a weaker material. The wearing of signet rings is a longstanding tradition among nobles in many cultures.

Sigillography (sometimes referred to under its Greek name of Sphragistics) is one of the auxiliary sciences of history. It refers to the study of seals attached to documents as a source of historical information. It concentrates on the legal and social meaning of seals, as well as evolution of their look. As such, it is closely related to heraldry.

Signature (from Latin signare, "sign") is a handwritten (and sometimes stylized) depiction of someone's name (or some other identifying mark) that a person writes on documents as a proof of identity and will. It acts as a seal. The writer of a signature is a

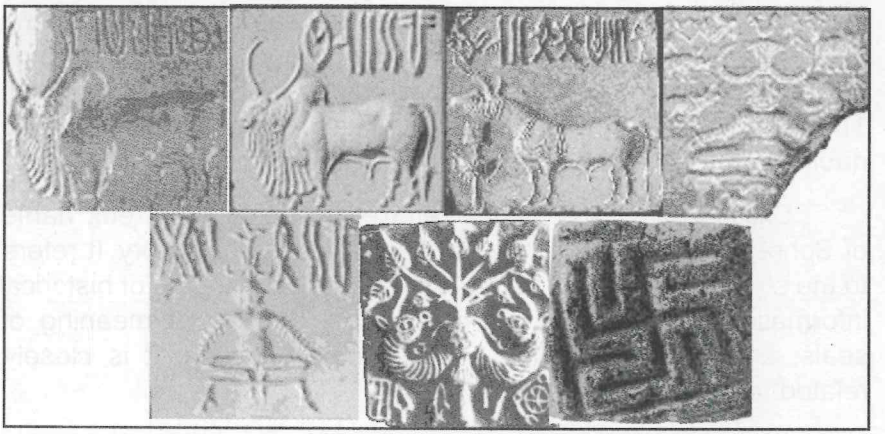
signatory. Like a handwritten signature, a signature work describes the work as readily identifying its creator. The traditional function of a signature is evidential; it is to give evidence of:

1. the provenance of the document (identity)
2. the intention (will) of an individual with regard to that document.

Seals and Signet Rings in India

Sealings have been found during various excavations especially from north India. However there has been paucity of seals. It is possible that these may have been destroyed after the death of its owner so as to avoid its fraudulent use.

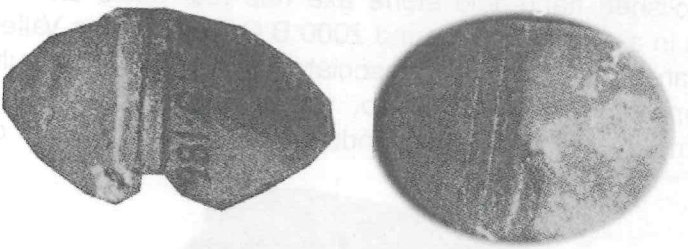
The earliest seals that have been encountered are those from the Indus valley. Harappan seals made of steatite stones were found in every room excavated. Harappan texts were found over 400 inscribed seals. There are three types of Harappan seals, one type square with short inscription above a carved animal motif. The second type square with only motif and no inscriptions. The third type is rectangular and only contains an inscription.



1.2. Indus Valley Seals – (top l to r) Bull seal, Bull seal, Unicorn seal Pasupati seal, (bottom l to r) Yogi seal, Om seal, Swastika Seal

The Harappan seals would have served several purposes including trade. However majority of them were also amulets or talismans requesting for some form of blessings for its bearer, from the personal God.

Signet rings were well known in the Magadhan period and the famous work; *Mudrakshasa* refers to the use of it. In the drama *Mudraraksasa*, Raksasa the minister of the Nandas, wonders whether he can deny the validity of a document bearing his own seal, although he was not responsible for its issue. In the Ramayana, Sita trusts Hanuman as Rama's messenger only on the presentation of the signet ring of Rama with his name engraved on it. The signet ring was sometimes the seal itself but often there are separate larger seals. India abounds in seals of various types found all over the land. It appears from the Sanskrit literature that from ancient times, kings, ministers, high officers of state, bankers, traders, and caravan leaders had their own seals which are called *nama-mudra*. These seals were used for the authentication of documents, security of documents and goods, identification of messengers and also as passport. In those days the impressions of the seals were made on wet lump of clay and fixed on the documents or the object sealed. The sealings in the two illustrations shown below (presently in the collection of Lucknow museum) depict the use of them to hold a string possibly to secure documents.

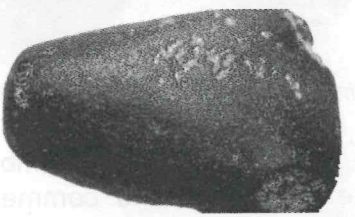


1.3. Sealings showing the impression of string

Sealings have been found in large numbers in sites, which are important centers of trade and commerce, religion and administrations. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Vadodara circle has unearthed 160 ancient seals, with the Brahmi script

inscribed on them, from the Hatab excavation site, located some 20 km south of Bhavnagar. The seals are said to be 2000 years old and were probably used to stamp goods that were to be exported. During ancient times, it is said that this part of Gujarat had extensive trade links with Greece and other parts of the world. Proving this fact are finds of the ASI like the Roman amphora (double-handled wine jug peculiar to Rome), copper coins and terracotta artifacts. Even in Kautilya's Arthashatra, it is mentioned about the practice of collecting taxes from ships sailing in the sea and rivers. The job of the *Antapala* (officer stationed at the border coast) was to collect taxes and also control the quality of goods that were to be exported. The seals found must have been used to mark the goods that were exported. The seals are well etched and are round and oblong in shape, almost similar to rubber stamps that are used today.

The study of seals also throws light on the culture. The discovery of a Neolithic stone celt, a hand-held axe, with the Indus script on it at Sembian-Kandiyur in Tamil Nadu is, a major discovery because for the first time a text in the Indus script has been found in the State on a datable artifact, which is a polished neolithic celt. This confirms that the Neolithic people of Tamil Nadu shared the same language family of the Harappan group, which can only be Dravidian. The discovery provides the first evidence that the Neolithic people of the Tamil country spoke a Dravidian language. The polished hand-held stone axe has four seals on it that are written in a script used around 2000 B.C. in the Indus Valley. Such seals are most commonly associated with the ancient cultures of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, ruined cities that both lay in modern-day Pakistan, thousands of miles to the north of Tamil Nadu.



1.4 Hand-held axe from Sembian-Kandiyur

In the medieval period, paper had come into use and the documents were written on them. A large number of paper documents – *firmans*, *sanads*, *ruqqats* and manuscripts have been found bearing the seal impressions of the kings, ministers, high officers of the state as well as of the individuals. *Ain-i-Akbari* written by Abul Fazal mentions of the seals usage by the King, Vakil and others. The details are furnished at Appendix A.

The Maratha authorities on their documents used two types of seals. One was called *sikka* and it was the personal seal of the authority (*nama-mudra*); the other was called *murattab* and was used at the end of the documents to indicate that it was complete or ended there. This latter seal had only words in Sanskrit or Persian, meaning that there was the end. The *murattab* was affixed at the end; and if there was any addition after the affixation of the *murattab* seal, the *murattab* seal was re-affixed at the end of the post-script. The *sikka* seal was always larger than the *murattab* seal in size; but in shape they were identical; and the two together formed a set. The faces of both the seals were kept covered with silken caps; and the capped seals of the set were placed within a pouch.

Characteristic Features of Seals of South India

A variety of materials have been used for making the seals reported in south India. Clay, stone, copper and bronze are the most common materials used while seals made of silver and gold have also been encountered more in the form of rings. Seals made of ivory are also met with. The seals are of various shapes although oval and rectangular were the most preferred one. Cylindrical shaped seals have also been reported from excavations in Andhra Pradesh.

The seals and sealings bear either devices or legends or combination of both. The devices used during the earlier period are more often animals. Usage of religious deities was prevalent starting from about fourteenth century although symbols with religious connotation such as srivatsa, swastika, chakra, sankha have been used in seals attributable to earlier periods. The devices used may have had affinity to the dynasty that ruled the part of the

country where it was used. The emblems used can also be considered as indicative of the religious leanings of the owner. Thus the use of Bull (vrishaba) or Nandi may be taken as indicative of leaning towards *saivism*, while the usage of conch, chakra may be indicative of leaning towards *vaishnaivism*. The use of only legends are seen as preference during later periods although signet rings with only legends and dated between 1st century B.C. and 2nd century A.D. have been reported during recent years from Karur.

The issue of copper plate charters have been in vogue in India and south is by no means an exception. The earliest grants on copper plate are dateable to fourth century A.D. The copper plates are secured through a copper ring, which passed through the holes on the copper plate and terminated on a seal. The device and legend come out of in relief on the countersunk surface of the seal. These seals are impressions and not dies. The seal served not only as a mark of authentication but also as a safeguard for the copper plates could not be replaced without breaking the seal. The tampering with the seal or the ring would render the grant null and void. The practice of inscribing the name of the artist who created the seal (especially inscribed seals) seems to have been in vogue and at least one such instance has been encountered.

The seals served various purposes. As stated earlier, the seals on the copper plates served to safeguard the integrity of the copper plates. Some of the seals found belonged to merchants and private owners. These were possibly used to authenticate commercial transactions. The affixing of the seal indicated authority and power of the issuer especially those with political authority. Seals were also issued by religious institutions such as *mathas* and a seal issued by Buddhist monastery at Dharanikota and dated to the first century B.C. is known.

Note on the Description of the Seals

The seals are described in the next three chapters. The next chapter deals with the uninscribed seals. The seals on copper plate grants are described in the third chapter while the fourth chapter details the inscribed seals.

The description of the seals generally does not follow a fixed template, since many of the published seals have incomplete details especially relating to the weight and size of the seals. Where possible the present author has tried to get the details from the original sources. However, some of the published seals mentioned here, still contain incomplete information. Most of the seals described follow the following template.

Seal no., metal, weight, size of the main face of the seal, provenance, published source.

Seal no. – This is numbered as chapter.number where chapter is the chapter number and number is the seal number starting from 1 to the maximum number in that chapter.

Metal – Other than detailing the metal, this also describes whether what is described is a seal or a sealing.

Size of the main face of the seal – This is the size of the portion where the seal is incused. Depending on the seal, this is either given as diameter for circular seals, major axis x minor axis for elliptical seals, length x breadth for rectangular seals, maximum size x minimum size for others.

The diameter of the ring portion or the height of the seal, where available, is given along with the detailed description of the seal.

Published source – The author's name and where multiple publication exists, the year of the publication, are provided. The details of the publication are provided in the Bibliography section.

If one or more of the above information is not available, the same is skipped and the available information is provided.

In the inscribed seals, the mirror images (sealing) is also shown to facilitate easy reading of the legends. The uninscribed seals contain only the images of the seals.

While describing the seal, the devices described are as seen in the seal and not what would be seen in a sealing (mirror image). Similarly while describing the sealing the description corresponds to what is seen in the sealing. There are however some confusions in the published material as sometimes it is not clear as to what is given/described is a seal or a sealing.

In the absence of any evidence on the usage of the seals, any conclusion that is drawn about the inscribed and uninscribed seals on their possible use is only a conjecture and not based on any facts. The present author has thus refrained from indicating the possible usage of most of the seals. Where possible usage is mentioned, it should be taken as tentative and not supported by any facts.

Tipu's adoption of Tiger motif as personal emblem

2

UNINSCRIBED SEALS

The seals listed in this section have wide range of devices. The devices used in many cases have close resemblance to those used in the south Indian coins. Some of the symbols found on the seals are exactly similar to those found on the coins. Thus we see the devices on the seals such as, hollow cross, arched hill, bow and arrow, Srivatsa, Nandipada, taurine symbol, Ujjain symbol, seated bull, standing bull, fish etc., are also used in the south Indian coinage. In many cases, the similarity of the devices on the seals with those found on the coins is used in the approximate dating of the seals. Some devices such as standing bull, lion have been used over long period of time, and in the absence of stratigraphic information the dates assigned to the seals/sealings should be considered as tentative.

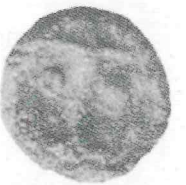
c. 3rd century B.C. - 7th century A.D.

2.1 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

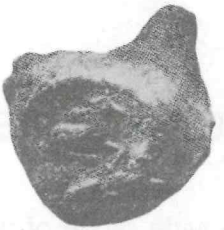
Hollow cross in the centre, above arched hill; two taurine symbols on either side of the arched hill.

2.2 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

Thunderbolt symbol.



2.3 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.



Seated bull facing right.

2.4 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

Boar facing left; above an arched hill with crescent; bow and arrow in the middle; unidentifiable symbol at the top. To the left of the bow and arrow is swastika and below it is sun and another unclear symbol. To the right of the bow and arrow are two wavy lines.

2.5 Terracotta sealing,Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

Bow and arrow enclosed in a circle.

2.6 Terracotta seal, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

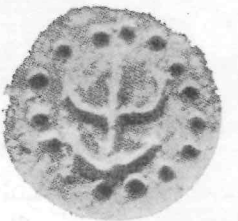
Bow and arrow.

2.7 Terracotta seal, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Srivatsa symbol enclosed inside a dotted circle. On the reverse side is a hollow cross symbol enclosed inside a dotted circle.

2.8 Terracotta sealing, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Srivatsa symbol inside a dotted circle.



2.9 Terracotta seal, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Semblance of a tree symbol.

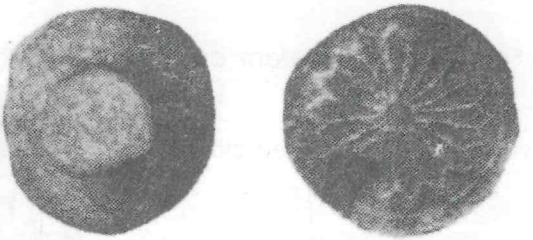
2.10 Terracotta seal, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Three concentric circles with dots inside.

2.11 Terracotta seal, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

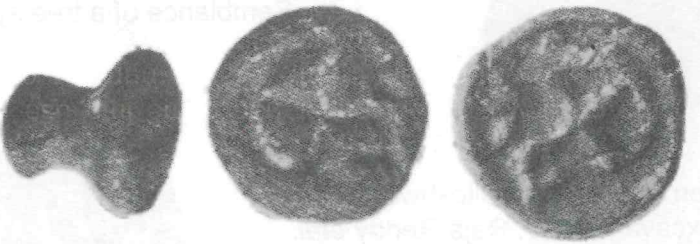
Tree with leaves.

2.12 Terracotta seal, Panigiri excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.



Lotus design enclosed inside a circle.

2.13 Terracotta seal, Peddabunkur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

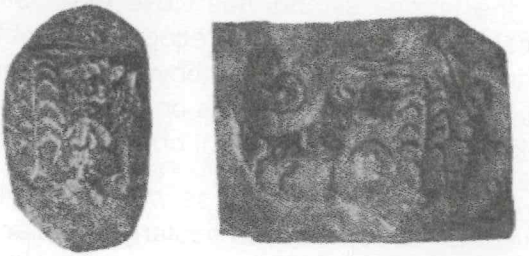


Unidentifiable symbol.

2.14 Terracotta seal, Peddabunkur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Ujjain symbol at the top; plough (ankusa?) in the centre; chakra below.

2.15 Terracotta seal, cylindrical shape, Yelleshwaram excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*



Lion and in front tree in railing. In the figure, the impression of the seal is also shown along with the seal.

2.16 Terracotta sealing, Dharanikota excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Lion facing right and in front tree in railing and to the extreme right a square symbol.

D. Raja Reddy and Suryanarana Reddy assign the above sixteen seals/ sealings to the period 3rd –1st century B.C.

Arched hill, arched hill with crescent above, are seen in the Magadh-Mauryan puchmarked coins as well as in the uninscribed cast coins found in north Karnataka and Andhra regions. They are

also seen on the Sangam age, Maharathi and Chutu coins. The mountain was an object of worship since the primitive age. The meaning and significance of this symbol on coins and seals is not clear. The Jainas adopted mountain as mount *Meru*, the representation of a Tirtankara. Another suggestion made is that the symbol with crescent may typify the aniconic representation of Siva and sometimes described as *trisanga parvata*. The earliest rendering of mountain symbols are found on seals and sealings from Harappa and Mohenjodaro and on the potteries of chalcolithic and megalithic culture. The arched hill also appears with devices such as peocock, dog, bull and tree on the punchmarked coins. Taurine symbols also accompany the arched hill in some coins. Taurine symbol is shaped like Brahmi *Ma* and it is the combination of sun and moon. This symbol is associated with the cult of fertility. In this aspect, the taurine symbol has close association with the bull and the mountain. The bull is a recognized emblem of Siva and the mountain with the crescent above also stand for *Girisa Chandrasekhara*. The mountain symbols on Satavahana coins have three, six and ten-arches with or without crescent.

Ujjain symbol, comprising of cross with four small circles at the end of the four arms, was particularly popular during the Satavahana period and is seen extensively used in their coinage. Several interpretations of this symbol has been made. It is considered by some as being associated with *Saiva* cult while others have suggested that the four arms of this symbol stand for the four major directions and that the symbol signifies the conquest of the four quarters upto the ocean. This has also been interpreted as the stylized form of swastika. The symbol doesn't appear to have been used during medieval and later period in the south Indian coinage.

Hollow cross is encountered on the uninscribed cast coins from Andhra. These are dated as belonging to 1st century B.C. – 2nd century A.D.

Tree symbol has been used over a wide range of period starting from the punchmarked coins to the coins of the Pallavas. Occasional usage of this symbol is seen in the coins of later

dynasties. Tree worship was deeply rooted in the religious life of the primitive man, and is of great antiquity. The *chaitya vriksa* or sacred trees are commonly mentioned in epics. The tree used may be regarded as distant prototypes of *chaitya vriksa* and *sthalavriksa*. The worship of tree spirits characterizes animastic conception. Its prevalence in chalcolithic period is shown by several pot shreds, seals and sealings. Some Harappan seals show various representations of sacred trees. The tree has been shown in the railing on some seals and also on early Indian coinage.

Bow and arrow device is seen in the punchmarked coins, the coins of Chutus and Kuras and in Sangam age Chera coins. Bow and arrow was the dynastic symbol of the Sangam Cheras. The bow is also encountered in the Kongu Chera coins.

Lion was extensively used in the coinage starting at least from the Satavahana period.

2.17 Gold, 15.6 gm, 25 mm X 15 mm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].

The gold ring has the man wearing a loose garment (dothi?) around his waist along with a lady who is shown feeling shy. The purpose of this ring is not clear. It may have been used as a signet ring. The ring shows the workmanship standard during the Sangam age.

2.18 Bronze, 12.5 gm, 20 mm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].

The height of the seal is 14 mm. On the top portion of this seal is found a horse with bent knees in a position to drink water from a container which is kept on top of a pedastal; a flag on top of a pole is seen in front; in front of all these devices is a royal sword (?).

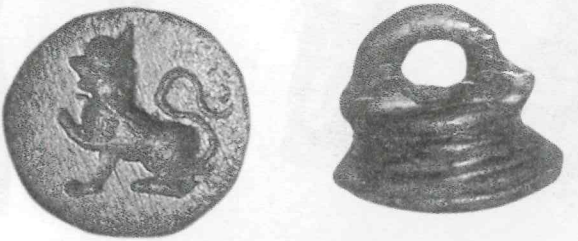
2.19 Bronze, 7.5 gm, 15 mm, Kaveripumpattinam.

The seal has at the back a ring of 6 mm diameter. The seal has a tiger to left.

2.20 Bronze, 6.6 gm, 19 mm, Kaveripumpattinam, A. Seetharaman [1994].

The height of the seal is 12 mm and the seal has a small ring of 6 mm diameter at the back in the centre for possibly holding the seal. The seal has a tiger seated to left with one of the front paw lifted.

2.21 Bronze, 6.15 gm, 13 mm, Kaveripumpattinam, A. Seetharaman [1994].

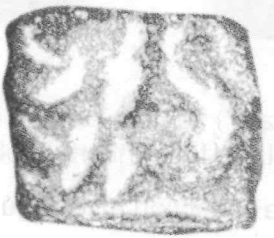


The seal at the back is in conical shape of height 11 mm, which includes a small ring of 4 mm diameter. The seal has a tiger seated to left with one of the front paw lifted.

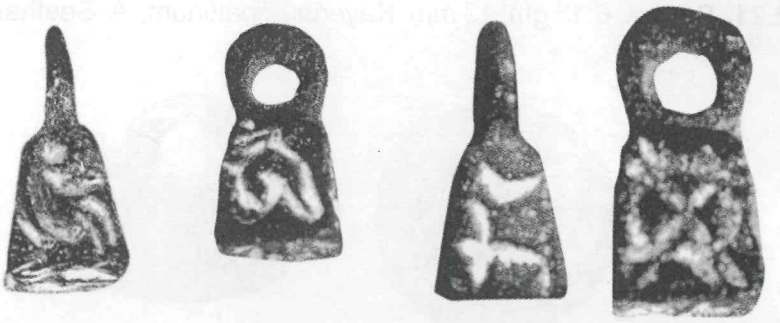
2.22 Copper, 6.6 gm, 15 mm, Kaveripumpattinam, A. Seetharaman [2002].

The seal is in the shape of a ring, which has, a tiger seated to right; in front a lampstand(?). The ring's dimension is 15 mm x 9 mm.

2.23 Bronze, 2.8 gm, 7 mm x 7 mm, Karur.



The height of the seal is 12 mm. The seal carries a lion/tiger at the bottom and has on each of its four sides the following devices – a conch, a lampstand and a crescent, a chakra, a



seated monkey. The top is terminated with a hole possibly to string the seal.

Tiger was the royal emblem of the Sangam Cholas. Kaveripumpattinam was their capital. R. Krishnamurthy assigns the period between 300 B.C. to A.D. 300 as belonging to the Sangam age. It is possible that the seals with tiger device were used by traders during Sangam Chola times at Kaveripumpattinam and Karur.

2.24 Bronze, 7.2 gm, 17 mm, Tiruvarur.

Monkey (Hanuman?) seated, flanked by lampstand on either side; crescent moon at the top, uncertain object at top right.

The seal is in the collection of V. Raju of Karur.

The monkey device shown in this seal has close resemblance to the one shown in the previous seal. Thus this seal has been classified as belonging to the same period.

2.25 Bronze, 3.6 gm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [2002].

The ring is broken and the face of the ring has a maximum length of 18 mm and width of 12 mm and has a Nandipada. The Nandipada is in relief.

2.26 Bronze, 1.9 gm, Karur.

The plate possibly part of a ring has a length of 13 mm and width of 8 mm and has a Nandipada. The Nandipada is in relief.

Nandipada means the foot of *Nandi*. As a symbol, Nandipada became popular in the Vedic and Puranic literature. It was adopted as an auspicious mark by the Buddhists and the Jains. Nandipada has two aspects; first religious due to its close association with *Nandi*, and the second as Triratna of Buddhism and Jainism. Triratna in Buddhism symbolizes three main aspects of worship, namely Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In Jainism, it denotes three principal aspects – right knowledge, right conduct and the right faith. On account of its earliest occurrence on the Indus valley seal, it has been suggested that it is *saivite* in nature. Nandipada symbol is also engraved in the cave inscriptions, mostly in the beginning of the inscriptions and occasionally in the end. Nandipada

is seen in the coins of Sangam age and those of the Chutus. Its usage is not evidenced during medieval and later period.

2.27 Bronze, 2.8 gm, 18 mm x 12 mm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [2002].

The ring is broken; Srivatsa symbol in relief.

2.28 Copper, 2.6 gm,15 mm x 10 mm, Karur.

The seal is in the form of a ring, which is broken and has a Srivatsa with crescent moon on either side.

2.29 Bronze, 3.6 gm, 10 mm, Karur.

The height of the seal is 8 mm and the seal has a hole at the end possibly to string together with other seals. Srivatsa with lampstand on either side.

2.30 Stone, 2.7 gm, 15 mm, Madurai.

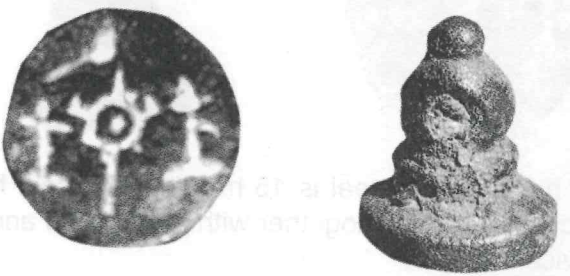
The seal is conical at the back and the height of the seal is 9 mm. The seal has a Srivatsa symbol.

2.31 Bronze, 6.8 gm, 15 mm, Karur.

The height of the seal is 12 mm and the seal has a hole at the end possibly to string together with other seals. Srivatsa with lampstand on either side. On top is crescent moon.

Srivatsa is one of the most auspicious and significant symbols of Indian art. It was adopted widely in Vaishnaivism, Jainism and Buddhism. Srivatsa is seen in the centre of the chest of all Jaina Tirtankaras and Vishnu images as *Mahapurasha laksana*. The symbol has special iconographic importance for Tirtankara images where it is a distinguishing mark between the Tirtankara and Buddha images. Srivatsa also finds frequent representations on Indian temples, stupas, arched-gateway, sculptures, epigraph, stone umbrellas, terracotta seals and figures, beaded necklets and also on the palms and soles of the Tirtankara and Buddha figures. The symbol has been widely used in south Indian coinages - in punchmarked coins, in the coins of Maharathis, Sangam age coins, and in Pallava coins. It is not seen in medieval and later issues.

2.32 Bronze, 7.7 gm, 13 mm, Karur.

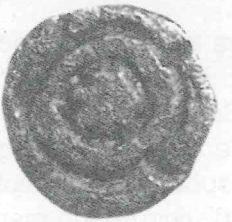


The seal has a *Chakra* with lampstand on either side. On one side is a *chourie*.

2.33 Copper, 4.9 gm, 15 mm x 20 mm, Karur.

The seal in the form of ring is 16 mm x 20 mm. *Chakra* with lampstand on either side.

2.34 Bronze, 4.6 gm, 10 mm, Karur.



The seal has a device possibly representing *Kamadenu* and below the *Chakra* device. At the top is a circular ring for holding the seal. Height till the top of the head of *Kamadenu* is 20 mm.

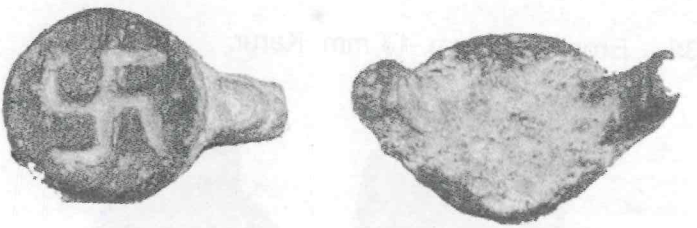
2.35 Bronze, 5.2 gm, 10 mm, Karur

The height of the seal is 15 mm and the seal has a hole at the end possibly to string together with other seals and has *Chakra* as the device.

The Chakra is one of the most popular symbols of ancient Indian art and tradition. In Vaishnaivism, it is *Sudharsana-chakra*.

In Buddhism and Jainism it is *Dharma-chakra*. The main characteristic of Chakra as a weapon was its ability to return to the hands of the master. The importance of Chakra worship in ancient India is amply demonstrated by its repeated representations in early Indian art, some examples of which are at Sarnath, Sanchi, Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Amaravati, Nagarjunikonda and Mathura. Chakra is used as a device in punch marked coins. Its usage is also seen in Sangam age coins and in the coins of Pallavas. It has also been used till about 18th century, usually accompanied by conch, in the coins of Vijayanagar rulers, Nayaks and feudatory Chiefs.

2.36 Bronze, 4.2 gm, 15 mm x 17 mm, Karur.

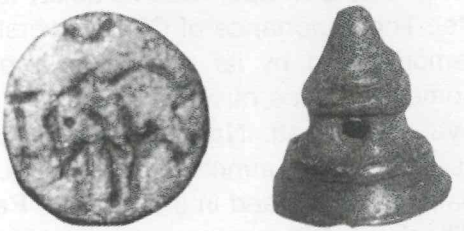


The seal is in the form of a ring, which is broken at the back and has a swastika.

The seal is in the collection of V. Raju of Karur.

Swastika is one of the oldest symbols of mankind, has been found more or less all over the world, continuing up to the present day. It is a sacred symbol of benediction, blessing of long life, good fortune and good luck. Swasti means benediction and blessing. According to various Indian conceptions, Swastika is an auspicious mark, a good luck sign, symbol for Omkara, for Buddha and Siddha, the crossing of the arms, the meeting of four roads, a type of village, a journey, a window, a type of building, a sitting posture. Swastika is seen on uninscribed cast copper coins, in the coins of Chutus, Sangam age and in Pallava coins.

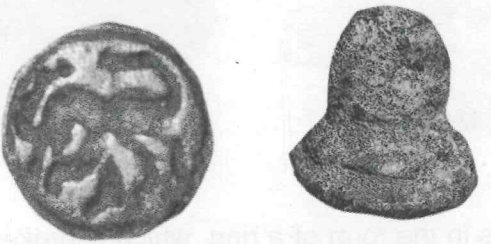
2.37 Bronze, 11.0 gm, 15 mm, Karur.



The height of the seal is 18 mm. Elephant to left; in front lampstand; above crescent moon.

Elephant was extensively used in the south Indian coinage right from the punchmarked coins. The assignment of this seal is based on the fabric. It could as well belong to a later period.

2.38 Bronze, 7.9 gm, 13 mm, Karur.



The height of the seal is 15 mm. Uncertain object.

2.39 Bronze, 1.5 gm, 10 mm, Karur.

The seal has a ring of 5 mm diameter at the back to hold the seal and has a horse to left.

Horse was used as the device in the Andhra coins starting from the Sebakas. It is rarely encountered in the south Indian coins during the medieval period and occasionally encountered

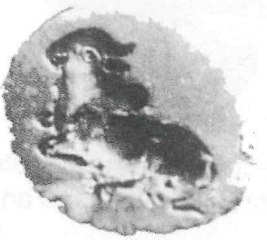
during the later period. The depiction of the horse in the above seal is crude and is not elegant as the one seen in Sebaka coins and their seals. The seal may belong to a later period than what is assigned now.

c. 7th century – 9th century A.D.

2.40 Bronze, 13.4 gm, 15 mm, Kumbakonam, A. Seetharaman [2002].

On the face of the seal is a seated bull (Nandi), with lampstand on either side; above a royal umbrella flanked by two *chouries*.

The seated bull was the emblem of the Pallavas (see their seals on copper plate grants). Nandi was also the royal emblem of other dynasties like Nolambas. However the seated bull is similar to the Pallava bull. The royal insignia used in the seal indicates the importance of the seal.



2.41 Bronze, 10.2 gm, 23 mm, Karur.

Bull seated (Nandi) to left. The bull is a typical Pallava bull. Thus this seal may be attributed to the period of the Pallavas.

The seal is in the collection of V. Raju of Karur.

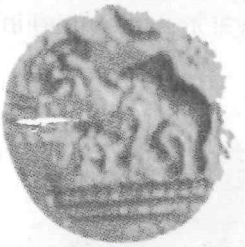
2.42 Terracotta Sealing, 35 mm, Darasuram excavations, T. Satyamurthy.

The sealing was found in Darasuram, a suburb of Kumbakonam, located near Palayarai, the ancient capital of the Cholas, while carrying out an earthwork excavation of the temple. The sealing has a standing bull on platform with a lampstand in front.

Satyamurthy assigns this sealing to the Pallavas as the sealing was found in association with potsherds and broken lion pillar assignable to the Pallava period. He assigns the period of eighth century A.D.

c. 10th century – 14th century A.D.

2.43 Bronze, 37 gm, Thanjavur, A. Seetharaman [2004].



On the face of the seal is a moving elephant being observed by a tiger seated on a throne; above sun and moon.

Seated tiger was the royal emblem of the medieval Cholas. Similar devices are seen on their coins and in the seals on their copper plate grants. It is possible that this was a royal seal signifying the Chola power, as the tiger is seated at a higher level than the elephant. From the typology, the seal can be dated as belonging to 11th century.

2.44 Bronze, 52 gm, Thanjavur, A. Seetharaman [2004].

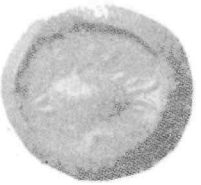
On the face of the seal is seen a figure (Siva?) seated on a bull. The figure has an umbrella on one hand and a sword on the other. Behind the bull is seen a lampstand and in front a seated tiger; above a crescent moon.

The seal was possibly used in Siva temples during medieval Chola period.

2.45 Bronze, 8.0 gm, 22 mm x 11 mm, Karur.

The seal is in the form of a ring of diameter 15 mm. A seated tiger as seen on medieval Chola coins.

2.46 Carnelian, 0.5 gm, 8 mm diameter, 3 mm thick, Karur, A. Seetharaman [2002].



The Carnelian probably part of a ring has the image of a fish with crescent moon on either side.

2.47 Bronze, Madurai, A. Seetharaman [2002].

The ring has a fish with a crescent at the top.

2.48 Bronze, 6.0 gm, 20 mm x 5 mm, Madurai.

The seal in the form of ring is 20 mm x 15 mm and has a fish.

Fish was the royal emblem of the Pandyas who had Madurai as their capital. The three seals described above may have been used by traders at Madurai.

2.49 Bronze, 5.7 gm, 13 mm x 16 mm.

The seal in the form of a ring is 16 mm x 12 mm. This ring has a device representing two lions (?) with single head.

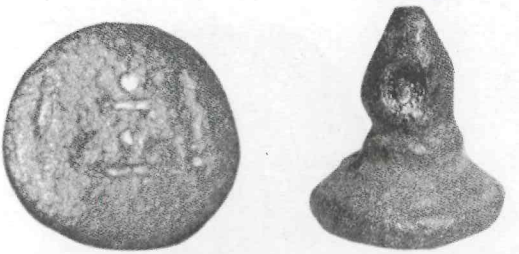
It is difficult to date this ring as the device used is uncommon. However based on the fabric, the seal is classified as belonging to this period.

c. 15th century – 19th century A.D.

2.50 Bronze, 9.3 gm, 15 mm, Karur.

The height of the seal is 17 mm. Seated deity; on the left lampstand and on the right a conch(?); indistinct object on either side at the top.

2.51 Bronze, 9.3 gm, 15 mm, Karur.



The height of the seal is 15 mm. Seated deity; on either side lampstand.

The deity seen on the above two seals may be Lakshmi. Similar devices (with better depiction) are only encountered during the 16th – 19th century coins belonging to Nayaks. These seals could as well belong to an earlier period.

2.52 Bronze, 7.6 gm, 13 mm, Karur.

The height of the seal is 18 mm and the seal has a hole at the end possibly to string together with other seals. The seal has *a* conch flanked by two lampstands.

Conch was used extensively by the Pallavas and as a device is seen along with Chakra in south Indian coinage during Vijayanagar period and later issues. Its depiction along with other devices (e.g. with Hanuman in Hangal Kadamba coins) is seen during earlier issues. The seal may belong to an earlier period than what it is assigned now.

2.53 Bronze, 3.1 gm, 15 mm, Karur.

The seal has a ring of 8 mm diameter at the back to hold the seal. Bull right; lampstand in front; crescent moon at the top.

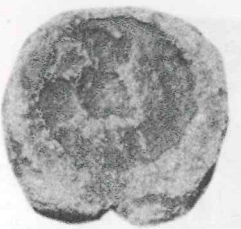
2.54 Bronze, 7.7 gm,15 mm, Karur.

The diameter of the ring is 15 mm. Bull to left.

2.55 Bronze, 1.4 gm, 12 mm, Karur.

The diameter of the ring is 8 mm. Bull right; crescent moon at the top.

2.56 Lead, 14.7 gm, 20 mm, Karur.



The seal is 3 mm thick and has Bull to right.

2.57 Bronze, 10 gm, Tiruvannamalai, A. Seetharaman [2004].

Bull right; crescent moon at the top and a dagger in front.

2.58 Bronze, 5.1 gm, 17 mm, Karur.

Bull left; above sun and crescent moon. The seal is about 4 mm thick and has a small ring of about 5 mm diameter at the back to hold the seal.

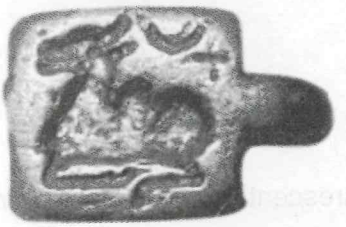
The seal is in the collection of V. Raju of Karur.

The depiction of the bull appears to be an earlier one as seen on some of the Maharathi coins. This seal thus could be an earlier issue.

2.59 Silver, 1.1 gm, 8 mm x 8 mm.

The plate should have been part of a ring. Bull to right; above crescent moon.

2.60 Silver, 1.9 gm, 10 mm x 10 mm.



The ring is broken. *Nandi* to left; above crescent moon.

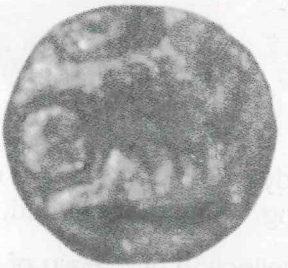
2.61 Copper, 1.4 gm, 12 mm x 15 mm.

The ring's diameter is 12 mm. *Nandi* to left; above crescent in front is a lampstand.

It is difficult to assign the seals with the standing Bull and Nandi to a particular period. Bull has been used over a long period. Bull is seen in the punchmarked coins, in the coins of Maharathis, Pallavas, Vijayanagar rulers, Nayaks and feudatory Chiefs. Standing bull is *vrishaba*, the vahana of Siva and seated bull is the *Nandi*.

Bull is thus *saivite* in nature. Nandi was the royal emblem of many dynasties including the Pallavas and the Nolambas.

2.62 Bronze, 3.0 gm, 12 mm, Karur.



The seal has a ring of 7 mm diameter at the back to hold the seal. A scorpion flanked by lampstand and crescent moon.

2.63 Bronze, 2.4 gm, 8 mm, Karur.

The height of the seal is 12 mm and terminates with a hole at the tip to possibly string the ring. A scorpion and arrowhead.

The usage of scorpion is rarely seen in the coins. There may be only one or two instances, we have encountered this device in the uninscribed coins belonging to 16th –18th century A.D.

2.64 Bronze, 2.1 gm, 10 mm, Karur.

The height of the seal is 12 mm. Deer looking back; in front lampstand, above crescent moon.

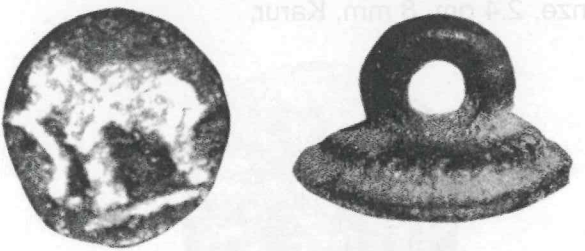
The deer is similar to the deer seen on the *thara* issues of Hoysala/Vijayanagar rulers.

2.65 Bronze, 3.1 gm, 13 mm, Karur.

Figure with lion body (Vyagrapadha?) to right. Coins with this device were minted during Vijayanagar period.

The seal is in the collection of V. Raju of Karur.

2.66 Bronze, 1.3 gm, 10 mm, Karur.



The seal has a ring of 5 mm diameter at the back to hold the seal and has an elephant to left.

2.67 Bronze, 7.6 gm, 16 mm.

The ring 15 mm in diameter has a peocock to left.

2.68 Silver, 1.7 gm, 12 mm, Karur.

The seal has small ring of 4 mm diameter at the back; Ganesa seated.

Ganesa was used as a device in the south Indian coins only from about 17th century A.D. The device was used amongst others by the Nayaks of Madurai, the Sivaganga lords and the Mysore rulers. The seal probably belongs to 18th/19th century A.D.

2.69 Silver, 4.9 gm, 12 mm x 15 mm, Karur.

The diameter of the ring is 15 mm; depiction of *Matsya avatar* of Vishnu.

Matsya avatar of Vishnu is rarely encountered in the south Indian coins and only one or two instances is known. These are uninscribed coins belonging to 17th/18th century A.D. The seal probably belongs to 18th/19th century A.D.

2.70 Silver, 6.2 gm, 12 mm x 14 mm.

The seal is in the form of a ring of diameter 20 mm and has a standing Deity. The seal probably belongs to 19th century A.D.

2.71 Silver, 1.9 gm, 9 mm x 9 mm.

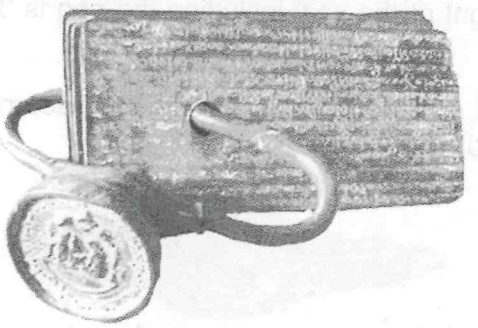
A ring 4 mm diameter is fixed at the back of the seal. Uncertain object.

3

SEALS ON COPPER PLATE GRANTS

Copper plate inscriptions along with stone inscriptions play an important role in the reconstruction of the history of India. Copper plate inscriptions (*tamarashasana*), usually record grants of land or lists of royal lineages carrying the royal seal. The earliest authenticated plates were issued by the Pallava dynasty kings in the 4th century A.D. and are in Prakrit. An example of early Sanskrit-Kannada copper plate bilingual inscription with Kannada words to describe land boundaries, are the Tumbula inscriptions of Western Ganga Dynasty dated A.D. 444. The copper plate inscriptions have for many centuries remained the primary source of legal records.

The copper plates are secured through a copper ring, which passes through the holes on the copper plate and terminates on a seal. The device and legend come out of in relief on the countersunk surface of the seal. The seal served not only as a mark of authentication but also as a safeguard for the copper plates could not be replaced without breaking the seal. The tampering with the seal or the ring would render the grant null and void.



3.1 Copper plates and seal

3.2 Seal on the Chikkulla plates of the Vishnukundin king Vikramendravarman II issued during the tenth year of his reign.

The copper plates are secured by a ring measuring about 6 mm thick and 75 mm diameter which ends into the lower part of a circular seal which contains a well executed lion to left, with raised fore-paw, open mouth, and apparently with double tail.

3.3 The seal on the Venalli grant of the Badami Chalukya king Vikramaditya-I issued during A.D. 596.

The weight of the seal including the ring is 390 gm; Boar to left.

3.4 The seal on the Honnur plates of the Badami Chalukya king Vikramaditya I.

Boar to left.

3.5 Seal on the Alavakonda grant of Pallava Vishnugopavarman.

The seal has deep sockets, probably six or seven, which indicates that they were meant for fixing the emblem (probably Bull/Nandi). A lengthy legend is engraved around the seal, which is restored as

Maharaja skandavarmana putrasya[*dhar*] *mma maharaja kandavarma*[*na*] *putrasya Vishnugo*[*pa*].

The legend on the seal provides the genealogy as follows:

Maharaja Skandavarman
|
Kandavaraman
|
Vishnugopavarma

3.6 Seal on the copper plate grant of Pallava Vijaya Skandavarman.

Standing bull to left.

3.7 Seal on the Chitrur plates of Pallava Nripatunga Varma.

The seal is from the copper plate grant of Nripatunga Varma during the sixth year of his reign. The weight of the seal and the ring is 1500 gm and the diameter of the seal is 13 mm.

The seal has a couchant bull to left with an ornamental lampstand to its front. On the other side of the bull is the *khatvanga*. Just above the bull is a representation of Sivalinga. There are also two *chouries* and a parasol between them.

3.8 Seal on the Velurpalaiyam plates of Pallava Vijaya Nandivarman III.

Ring is oval-shaped and measures 175 mm x 156 mm and the seal's diameter is 82 mm. Weight 394 tolas.

The seal has a Pallava bull in a recumbent posture facing left with an ornamental lampstand on either side of it. The bull and the lampstands are placed on a straight line, which may be taken as pedestal. Above the bull are engraved in one row, eight symbols of which a goddess (perhaps Lakshmi), flanked by two lampstands occupies the centre. Another symbol, which is recognizable, is Swastika. The remaining four symbols are indistinct. Above these are the royal insignia, viz., two *chouries* mounted on handles and

a parasol between them. Right round the margin of the seal is a defaced legend in Pallava-Grantha characters of which the syllables.....*va-nathasya Nan* [*tipa*] *nmas* [*ya*] *bhu* [*pa*] *the visva-* [*vi*] *sva* [*m*] *bhara-pala srih*, are visible.

3.9 Seal on the Velanjeri copper plate of Pallava Aparajita.

The seal is of 95 mm diameter mounted on a ring of 160 mm diameter.

Seated bull in the centre facing left flanked by lamps on stands. Above the bull are shown ashtamangalas (the eight auspicious symbols), among which Kendi, Srivatsa, lamp and mirror are clearly seen. This is topped by an umbrella and fly whisks flanking the parasol. In the rim portion is an inscription in Grantha characters reading

Svasti Sri
- - - ntrasa siras sreni sri sikha sayi sasanam
rajnah Pallava vamsendoh Aparajitavarmanah
Aparajitavarmanah.

The seal is embossed by a smith whose name is given as *Videlvidugu Perunkannan*. This is the first time we come across in the Tamil country the name of the artist who embossed the royal seal.

The grant was issued by Aparajita (A.D. 870 - 890) in his ninth regnal year.

3.10 Seal on the Paithan plates of the Rashtrakuta king Govinda III (A.D. 793 – 814).

The ring is about 11 mm thick and 80 mm in diameter. The seal, into the socket of which the ring is soldered, is about 43 mm in diameter. In relief on a countersunk surface, the seal has the representation of Garuda, squatting, facing full front; his hands joined, palm to palm, on the chest and are turned upwards, his feet are joined sole to sole and are turned downwards; and the mark at each side denote his wings. Weight of the ring and the seal is 55 ½ tolas. The grant is dated 4th May A.D. 794.

3.11 Seal on the Jambgaon plates of Indra III (A.D. 914 – 928).

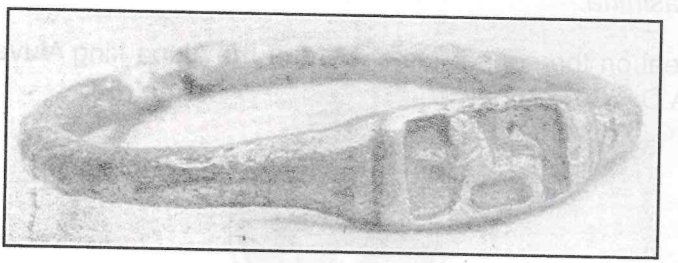
The seal is square in shape, bears in relief on a countersunk face, the figure of Garuda squatting on a lotus seat facing full front. Each of his two hands is holding a hooded serpent, which appears to entwine his waist. On his proper right in the upper corner, is the figure of Ganapati, with a *chourie* lower down and below it a lamp. On his proper left, in the upper corner, is the figure of Durga riding a lion with a Swastika mark below. On each

side of the head of Garuda is indistinct legend, which may have been *Sriman—Nityavarshadevasya*. Ring and seal together weigh 2250 gm.

3.12 Seal on the Andura plates of Govinda IV.

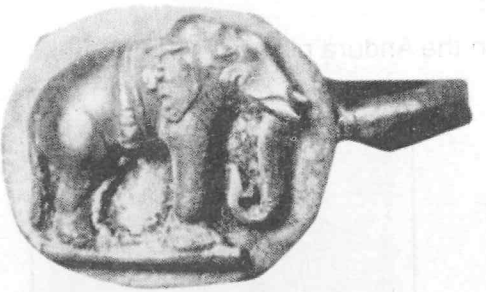
Seat has in relief on a countersunk surface, the figure of Garuda, squatting on a lotus with face facing front with the wings expanded and a serpent held in one hand. On his proper right there is figure of squatting Ganapati and on his proper left that of a squatting Goddess Parvati holding a *sula* in each hand. Below, on either side, there appear three knobs in place of a *chourie* and a lamp seen. Below the knobs on the proper right of Garuda there appears a Swastika and to its right just below the Garuda, a sheathed dagger. Ring and seal weigh 1640 gm.

3.13 Seal on the Pandarangapalli grant of Rashtrakuta Avidheya.



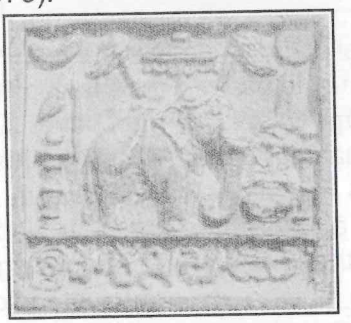
Lion facing left. The seal is 22 mm x 12 mm.

3.14 Seal on the Kerehalli (Chamarajanagara) grant of the Ganga king Ereganga.



Elephant to right.

3.15 Seal on the copper plate grant of the Ganga king Marasimha (A.D. 960 – 973).



Elephant to right; above parasol flanked by two *chouries*, sun and moon; in front a dagger, lampstand and a water pot; behind lampstand and elephant goad; below Kannada legend *Sri Marasimha*.

3.16 Seal on the copper plate grant of the Alupa king Aluvarasa II (A.D. 730 – 765).

The full-length Kannada copper plates in old Kannada script belonging to the Alupa King Aluvarasa II from Belmannu, Karkala Taluk, Udupi District, displays the double crested fish, the royal emblem of Alupa kings.

3.17 Seal on the Niduparu grant of Jayasimha I (A.D. 641 – 673).

The diameter of the ring is 66 mm. Seal is 37 mm in diameter and bears the legend – *Sri Sarvasiddhi* with a crescent at the top and an expanded lotus-flower of nine petals at the bottom.

3.18 Seal on the Konelu grant of Vishnuvardhana II dated 669 A.D.

The diameter of the seal is 42 mm. Legend *Sri Vishamasiddhi*; above crescent; below lotus.

3.19 Seal on the Kalidindi grant of Eastern Chalukya Rajaraja I.

The surface of the seal is countersunk on either side. The base of the seal is moulded into the shape of a four-petalled flower. On the upper face, it bears the legend *Sri Tribuvanamkusam* in relief across the middle. Above the legend is the boar in running position facing the proper left, and other symbol of royalty: the elephant goad, the *damaru*, the *sankha*, two *chouries* and the royal parasol. The figures of crescent moon and the sun are on top. Below the legend are seen three objects, a four legged stool in proper right, a four-petalled flower in the centre, and a lotus bud with a stalk in the proper left.

3.20 Seal on the Manda copper-plate grant of Eastern Chalukya king Rajarajanarendra (A.D. 1019 - 1060).

In the middle of the seal is the legend *Sri Tribhuvanamkusa*. Above the legend is a boar. Facing the animal is a conch and behind the tail a *damru*. Above sun, moon and *chhatra*. Below the legend is an elephant goad. At the bottom, appear a small stole, and a four-petal flower with a stalk and a bud.

3.21 Seal on the copper plate grant of an Eastern Chalukya ruler.

In the middle of the seal is the legend *Sri Tribhuvanamkusa*. Below the legend is a boar. Facing the animal is an elephant goad. Above the legend is sun and crescent moon. At the bottom, petal flower.

3.22 Seal on the Velanjeri plates of Parantaka Chola (A.D. 907 – 955).

The seal 75 mm in diameter is fastened to a ring 150 mm in diameter. On the face of the seal is found two fish and a seated tiger placed on a bow flanked by lampstands and topped by a parasol and two *chouries*. Running around the emblem is the inscription in Grantha characters recording that it is a charter of Parakesarivarman. The inscription on the seal reads.

Srimat Chandra nyutereva Chola vamsa sikhamaneh
Sasanam Chola bhubartuh Parakesarivarmanah.

3.23 Seal on the Mallavaram plates of Parantaka.

Weight of the ring and the seal is 1450 gm. A seated tiger with mouth open and is seated on its haunches facing the proper left (or facing to our right as we see it) and its tail drawn to the front between the hind legs. In the front of the tiger are two fish, representing the Pandya crest, and underneath the fish, is a very small bow representing the Chera crest. Behind the tiger is a lampstand, and behind the two fish is another lampstand. Over the fish and the tiger is a parasol with two *chamaras*, one *chamara* to the right of the parasol and the other in between the two fish. Legend above *Svastisri Para-vira Sri Paramtakasya* or *Svastisri Parakesari Paramtakasya*.

While describing the seal, Ramesan points out the difference between this seal and the seal of Tiruvalangadu plates of Rajendra Chola I. The main points of difference are given in the next page.

Details found in the seal of the Tiruvalangadu plates of Rajendra I	**Details found in the Mallavaram plates of Parantaka**
The tiger is seated to the right of the seal	The tiger is seated to the left
The entire portion below the tiger and the fish is represented by a big bow which is concentric with the rim of the seal	The bow is shown separately as a small tiny figure
Behind the lampstand and the two fish, there are three more figures – a spear, a flag and a cimatar or hatcher	These figures are absent
The two chouries near the parasol are on either side	The two parasols(?) are on one side only
Within the big bow, below the tiger are found figures of a water pot, a stand with a dish, a drum between two poles and a boar representing the Eastern Chalukyan crest	All the emblems are absent
All the figures are enclosed within a whole circle, the bow forming a part of an inner concentric circle. Between this circle and the circular edge of the seal, the name and birudas of Rajendra Chola are engraved in Grantha characters	No inscription between the outer circle and the edge of the seal is found. The inscription is found within the outer circle of the seal. Beyond this, only the rim of the seal is found

3.24 Seal on the Leiden plates of Chola Rajaraja I (A.D. 985 – 1017).

The copper plates are at Leiden university museum, Holland. Ring bearing the seal is of 112 mm in diameter with 16 knobs at about equal distances from each other around the margin. The central field contain, on the left two fish – the scales, fins, gills, eyes and mouth of which are clearly expressed, and on the right, a tiger. Over it is *chhatra*, with *chamara* on each side. Behind the tiger are a lampstand, a flag, another lampstand and an elephant goad, and behind the two fish is another lamp-stand, a flag and a device appearing like a fan. Below a boar, swastika symbol and three other objects are seen. A well-raised circle, double below surround all this and outside it, in raised character of Chola-Grantha type is the legend

Iti Rajendra-cholasya Parakesarivarmanah
Rajarajanyamakutasreni-ratneshu sasanam.

3.25 Seal on the Tiruvalangadu plates of Chola Rajendra I (A.D. 1012 – 1044).

For the details of the seal please see 3.23.

3.26 Seal on the Kallasambi grant of Kalyana Chlukya king Vikramaditya-VI issued during A.D. 1076/1077.

The weight 1175 gm including the ring. Boar to left; above the boar in two rows are the sun, a *chourie*, a crescent moon, a Swastika and a drum. Behind the boar is a lamp stand or a flagstaff. Below the Varaha lanchana (boar) is the legend *Srimat Chalukya Bhuvallabha.*

3.27 Seal on the Panjim grant of Goa Kadamba king Jayakesi I (A.D. 1050 – 1078).

Lion to left; above legend *Sri Malege Bhairava*. Behind the lion is a sword in an upright position.

3.28 Seal on the Garavapadu grant of Ganapatideva (A.D. 1199 – 1262).

A copper ring holds the plates, which are riveted into the back of circular seal. The ring and the seal have a diameter of 87.5 mm and 50 mm respectively.

Boar; in front a cow; above sun and crescent moon; in front a dagger.

3.29 Seal on the Alapadu grant of the Kakatiya king Yellana Deva of the time of Queen Rudrambika issued during A.D. 1265.

The weight is 337 gm including the ring. Boar to right; above crescent moon and sun.

3.30 Seal on the Khandvalli plates of Kakatiya king Prataparudra II (A.D. 1289 – 1323).

Boar and in front a cow and a sword facing upright. Above sun and crescent moon. Below legend in thirteenth century Kannada-Telugu characters *Daya Gaja I Kesari.*

3.31 Seal on the Puvvada grant of Prolaya Vema, the king of Kondavidu, issued during A.D. 1268.

The weight is 632 gm including the ring. A Nandi and the inscription reading *Sri Pallava Trinetra*.

3.32 Seal on a copper plate grant of Vijayanagar rulers.

Boar to left; in front a dagger; above sun and crescent moon.

3.33 Seal on a copper plate grant of Vijayanagar rulers.

Figure appearing either as *vamana avatar* of Vishnu or sage Vidyaranya.

The Rajas of Coorg ruled Coorg for two hundred years from about 1633 to 1834. The seals of two of the kings – Lingarajendra-vadeyar and Virarajendra-vadeyar are described here

3.34 Seal of Lingarajendra-vadeyar.

The seal is oval in shape with two concentric circles at the centre. Within the inner circle is the Kannada legend *Li m* standing for Lingarajendra-vadeyar. Below this is the year of the seal expressed in Christian era and some times in Kali year. Between the two concentric circles, around the central letter, the name of the king *Maharaja Linga Rajender Wadeer* is inscribed. Between the oval and the outer concentric circle, on either side where the space is broader, the name of the king and the kingdom along with the Kali year are inscribed in Persian characters. Such seals are found on the mahadvara entrance of Omkaresvara temple and in the court hall, which is a part of the palace, both built by Lingarajendra. Such seals are also found painted on the walls of the palace.

3.35 Seal of Virarajendra-vadeyar.

The seal is similar to the one described above except in the inner circle we find the Kannada letter *Vi* and the name of the king *Maharaja Veer Rajender Wadeer* is inscribed.

3.36 Seal on the kettle-drum on the roof of Melukote temple in Pandaripura.

This is the seal dated 1215 of the Mauladi era corresponding to A.D. 1786 and issued during the time of Tipu Sultan. The seal has the Persian legend

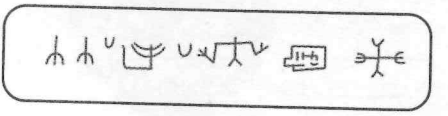
Ya-Karrar
Qitalduyam nakkara-i-zafar Asha (tha?)r Ali
Baksha nam Sirka-i-Haidari
Sal-i-Shita san 1215 Muhammad wazan Kham
haft
a(ra)tal si o haft nim dak

O Impetuous! The second piece of the victorious drum of Ali, finished under the excellent supervision of the Hydari Government in the year 1215, Shita of the Mauludi era. Its weight is 7 atl(ratl) and 37 1/2 dak (dang).

4

INSCRIBED SEALS

4.1 Bronze ring open at the end, 4.7 gm, 23 mm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].



The height of the plate is 6 mm. The ring has eight symbols similar to those found in Indus valley seals. It is likely that the ring may have been used as a circular seal. The seal possibly belongs to c. 500 B.C.

4.2 Terracotta sealing, Peddabunkur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*, Chandrashekhar Gupta.

Horse facing left; around Brahmi legend *Mahatalavarasa Maja Samikasa Siva Sebakasa*.

Chandrashekar Gupta read the legend as *Mahatalavarasa Vajisamikasa Siva Seba[ka]sa*. According to him, *vaji* with the word

samika gives the meaning as the owner of horse(s). This can be well compared with the royal title *asvapti* of the later period. The legend is the same as those found on copper and lead coins of Siva Sebaka and thus the sealing can also be attributed to Siva Sebaka.

4.3 Copper, 20 mm, Hyderabad, A.H. Siddiqui.

The copper seal was obtained in Hyderabad and is in a private collection. It has within a beaded circle a horse and Brahmi legend around; *Maharathisa Asaghosasa*. The seal thus belongs to a Maharathi by the name *Asvagosha*, the horse representing the *Asva*.

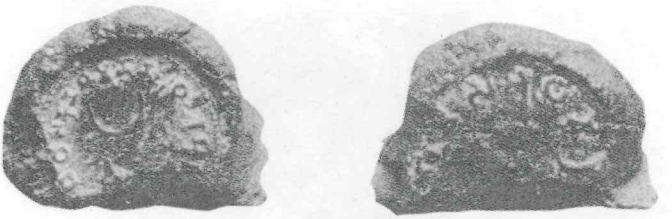
It is well known that various Maharathis ruled after the fall of the Mauryan dynasty till the rise of the Satavahanas. Some Maharathis were even ruling at the time of Satavahanas.

No coin of Asvagosha is known and thus the seal is important from historical perspective.

4.4 Terracotta seal, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal.*

Peculiar symbol in the centre. Brahmi legend *Pitulasa Gajakasa* around the periphery.

4.5 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

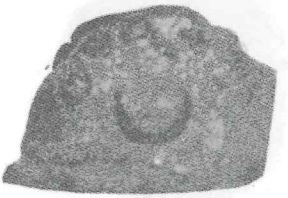


The sealing has inscription on both sides. On one side the Brahmi legend reads *Batisa Kanasa Manasa Ratha Vahi*; crescent moon in the centre. On the other side, Brahmi legend *Vatisa Athamira*.

4.6 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

The broken sealing has the Brahmi legend *Sakaka*.

4.7 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.



The sealing has the Brahmi legend *Samika Kabata*, crescent in the centre.

4.8 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

The broken sealing has the Brahmi legend *Pogatiyabati*. Traces of crescent moon in the centre.

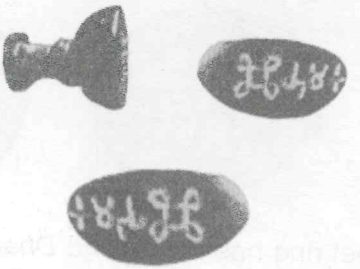
4.9 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

The broken sealing has the Brahmi legend *Matisa Jaya*. Three different designs of triangle headed standards in the centre.

4.10 Terracotta sealing, Kondapur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

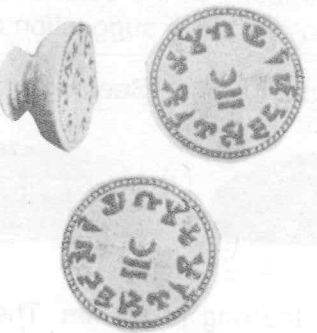
Symbol enclosed inside a half moon. Around legend *Mahatiputa saka.. da*.

4.11 Stone seal, Peddabunkur excavations, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.



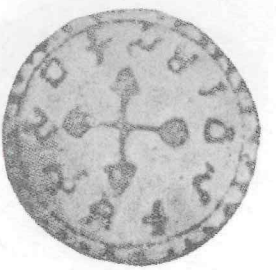
Legend *Kamasa*; geometrical pattern after the legend.

4.12 Ivory seal, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.



In the centre is crescent moon and below it are two lines; legend around *Ajapi Siriyagami Kumariva*. S. Rajavelu reads the legend as *Ajanisa rayo gami kumaraya*. According to him, on palaeographical grounds, the seal can be dated at around 2nd century A.D.

4.13 Ivory seal, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.



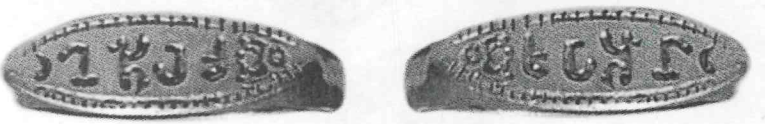
In the centre Ujjain symbol; around legend *Samara Vali Kamasa Sebaka*.

4.14 Gold, Maratha village, D. Raja Reddy *etal*.

This gold signet ring has the legend *Dharma vridhi*. The first letter actually appears as *bha*. Based on palaeography, the seal can be dated at around c. 3rd-4th century A.D.

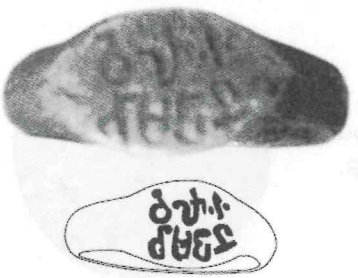
D. Raja Reddy and P. Suryanarayana Reddy place the above eleven seal/sealings as belonging to the Satavahana period. The majority of the legends found in the seals/sealings are either not complete or not clear to make any suggestion on their attribution.

4.15 Gold ring, 3.7 gm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].



The diameter of the ring is 16 mm. The ring has legend in Tamil-Brahmi characters *Vu pa Aa na* flanked by crescent moon and *Nadipada*. The significance of this legend is not clear. It may have been the name of the owner. The ring may belong to c. 2nd to 1st century B.C.

4.16 Silver, 1.2 gm, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].



The diameter of the ring is 13 mm. The ring has the Tamil-Brahmi legend *Velli / Chamban*. This ring may have belonged to a person named Samban belonging to *Velir* community. The ring possibly belongs to 1st century B.C.

4.17 Silver, 0.74 gm in broken condition, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].

The ring is in broken condition. In unbroken condition the ring should have had a diameter of 12 mm. The ring has the Tamil-Brahmi legend *Thithan.* At the left of the legend is Nandipada symbol. Since the legend in from left to right, we may take it that this was used as an identity ring. *Thithan* was the name of one of the Sangam Chola king who ruled from Urayur. It is possible that descendents of Urayur Chola were at Karur which is also confirmed from the fact that some of the Sangam Chola coins were found at Karur. Karur was a major trade centre during ancient times. The ring may belong to 1st century B.C.

4.18 Silver, 1.75 gm, 9 mm x 9mm square, Karur, A. Seetharaman [1994].

The height of the seal is 6 mm. The seal has the Tamil-Brahmi legend *Kuravana*; below Srivatsa symbol flanked by crescent moon on the left and Nandipada on the right. Kuravan is the common name of the people who lived at Kurinji. They were hill tribes and hence were known by the name *Kunrak kuravan* (Purananuru – 157). The seal may belong to c. 1st century B.C.

4.19 Ivory, 19 mm, Dharanikota excavations, I.K. Sarma.

The design repertoire occupying the face is artistically rendered in two registers. The base one is bordered by an incised two-barred rail pattern within which the five letters of the legend are executed from right to left. The upper register, a special semi-circular one, is a double storied building, the top storey is marked by a Kudu with a finial on top. The lower one has double Kudus with arched doorways. The entire structure is enclosed at base of a three-barred railing pattern. In front of the railing towards right (left side of the seal), is a pillar post with a rectangular capital over which is a Garuda, its tail curled up, and facing the entrance. Close left of this and at a lower level over a short post is a symbol of triangle-headed standard mounted on a rectangular base. On the left side of the entrance is a tree, circular sectioned with six leaves apparently a palm (Tala) tree and close by, its right side at a lower level is a bold Swastika mounted on a short post. There is difference of opinion on the structure depicted in this seal. Sarma identifies this structure as of Buddhist affiliation while Parabrahma Sastry identifies the structure as a brahmanical shrine meant for Kartikeya.

Sarma read the legend as *Gi da se la sa* and identified it as the label of the architectural edifice which stood for Gridharakula Saila of Rajagriha. Parabrahma Sastry and Dr. P.R.K Prasad read the legend as (*Kham*) *da sa la sa*, standing for Skandasala.

Sarma sums up with the note that the monastic seal obtained from Dharanikota excavations should be attributed to the Buddhist Sangha belonging to Gridharakuta Sala of Rajagriha and functioning at Sri Dhanyakataka Chaitya during 1st century B.C.

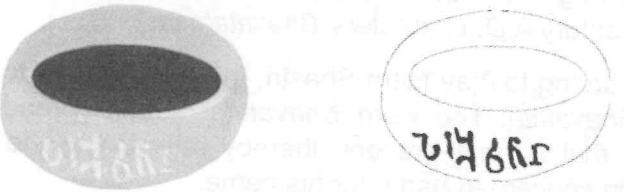
4.20 Gold, 9 gm, 17.5 mm, Ajay Mitra Shastri [2001].

To the ring is affixed on one face a spindle-shaped metallic piece which measures lengthwise 14 mm and breadth wise, 8 mm. It bears in its upper part a semi-circular Brahmi inscription in Sanskrit-influenced Prakrit reading *Bramhasahasa* and below it in the center, an incomplete figure in profile facing left.

The legend is meant for Sanskrit *Brahmasahasya*, 'of Brahmasaha', showing that it was a personal seal. The legend is dated at around early second century B.C. The symbol below may be taken as a lion or tiger.

The legend and the animal profile are in relief. The ring was evidently meant to serve as an identification mark.

4.21 Gold, Karur, T.S. Sridhar.



This gold ring has the Tamil-Brahmi legend *Pe ra Aa va tha n*. This may be dated at around 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D.

4.22 Gold, Karur, T.S. Sridhar.

This gold ring has the Tamil-Brahmi legend *Thi ya n O tha la n*. This may be dated at around 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D.

4.23 Silver, 5.0 gm, Karur, V. Raju.

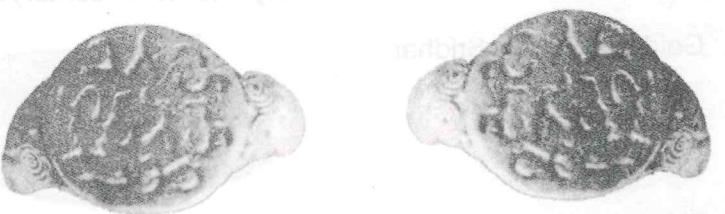
This ring has the Tamil-Brahmi legend *Aa n thi kaa n*. This may thus belong to a person named Anthikan. This ring possibly belongs to 1st century A.D.

4.24 Gold, 6.4 gm, 10mm x 17 mm, Karur, Ajay Mitra Shastri [2002].

The ring has within a beautiful border, the Prakrit legend in 2nd/3rd century A.D. characters *Bhavatatasa*.

According to Ajay Mitra Shastri, the ring belongs to a person named *Bhavatata*. The word *Bhavatata* means spread over the universe, that is omni-present, thereby referring to the God and the person concerned had it for his name.

4.25 Gold, Karur, K. V. Raman.



The ring has the Tamil-Brahmi inscription *Satan Satevegi*; below a taurine and a fish symbol.

On palaeographical grounds the ring has been dated to second-first century B.C. The legend on the ring is a combination of two words, Tamil *Satan* and Prakrit *Satevegi*. Names like *Satan*, *Atan* and *Kiran* were popular names found in ancient Sangam literature as well as in the early Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions. The ring appears to be that of a trader-cum-banker. This may be ascribed to one *Satan* who was a *Sarthavahi*, a leading merchant. This ring was used by him to authenticate the transactions as a kind of a seal of his official capacity.

4.26 Gold, 0.7 gm, 10 mm, R. Krishnamurthy [1997b].

The find spot of the ring is not known but it was received from a jeweler at Karur.

The ring is 3 mm wide in the middle. The ring has within an engraved oval border, Tamil-Brahmi legend *Ariaman*. At the left end is a dot and after the legend is a taurine symbol.

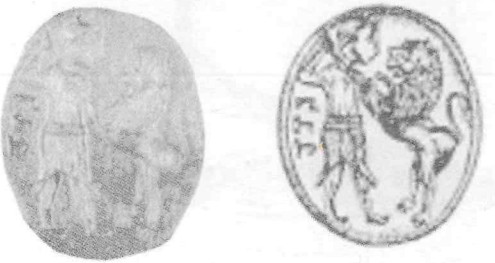
Commenting on the legend, Krishnamurthy feels that the legend should be *Atiaman* as *Ariaman* gives the meaning "Chief of the Manes". The legend hence is rejected as engraver's error. From palaeographic angle, the ring is assigned a period of around c. 100 B.C.

On the basis of the restored name, the ring is tentatively assigned to *Atiyaman*, a Sangam age chieftain.

4.27 Gold, 3.0 gm, 14 mm x 10 mm, Belgaum.

The seal in the form of a ring is 13 mm in diameter. Horse flanked by Brahmi *Sa* and *Ma* or taurine symbol; crescent moon at the top. The seal is in the collection of Pramod Vernaker of Belgaum. The ring can be dated at around c. 1st century A.D.

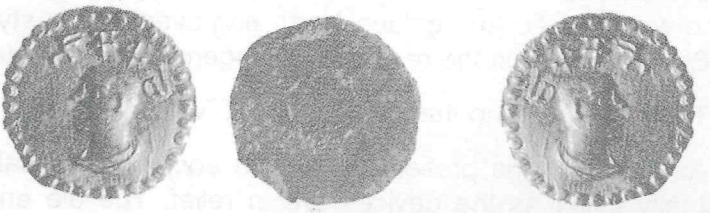
4.28 Gold, 12.85 gm, Karur, R. Krishnamurthy [2003].



On the face of the ring, elliptical in shape, a man standing, facing right. His right arm holds a dagger as if to kill the lion standing before him on its hind legs and it is about to pounce on him. The man is wearing a loose garment (dothi?) around his waist which hangs upto his knees, with inverted 'V'shaped cut on two sides and a band around his waist which may be a belt of cloth. He is also wearing an upper garment and a head dress resembling a cloth turban. There is a legend, in Tamil-Brahmi characters, on the left periphery, below the raised right hand, and the legend runs from top to bottom. The three letters may be read as *Theeyan*.

On palaeographical grounds, the legend may be assigned to second century A.D. On the basis of the legend, the ring may be assumed to have served as an identity ring of a person who bore the name or title *Theeyan*.

4.29 Silver, 1.7 gm, 17 mm, Karur, R. Krishnamurthy [1997a].

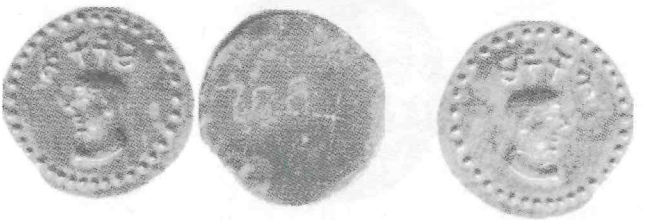


Portrait of king with a shaven head, with protruding nose, big eyes and thick lips; the portrait faces left; the legend *Mak-kotai* is in reverse and the character *Ma* differs from the known coins of Makkotai.

4.30 Silver, 1.4 gm, 15 mm, Karur, R. Krishnamurthy [1997a].

Portrait of king with a shaven head, with protruding nose, big eyes and thick lips; a tuft of hair is hanging on the back, ending near the scarf wrapped round the neck; the legend *Mak-kotai* is in reverse.

4.31 Silver, 2 gm, 18 mm, Karur, T.S. Subramanian.



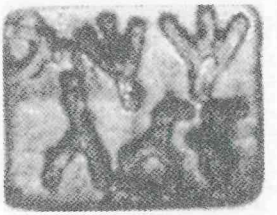
On the obverse side there is a mirror image of the Chera king of the Sangam age, Makkotai, facing left, and the legend *Makkotai* in Tamil-Brahmi script placed inside a dotted circle. It shows the king with a helmet, in a feature comparable to coins of Roman emperors of the first century A.D.

While the portrait coins of Chera kings Makkotai and Kuttuvan Kotai are uniface (with the reverse side remaining blank), this seal has the word *Ponko* [the golden king], engraved with a stylus, in Tamil-Brahmi script, on the reverse. The legend is incomplete.

This rare seal is in the collection of R. Vaidyanadhan.

According to the present author the above three seals may be actually coins as the devices are in relief. The die engraver must have forgotten to reverse the device and the legend in the die. In other words these coins were struck with error dies.

4.32 Bronze, Anaikoddai (Jafna district, Srilanka), K. Indrapala.

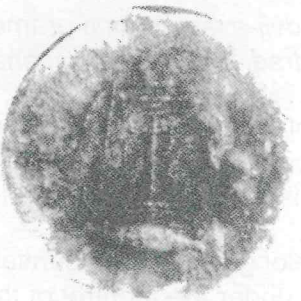


The first line has 3 symbols, attributed to the Megalithic period. The lower line has 3 letters in Tamil-Brahmi script of 2nd century A.D., *ko ve ta*.

4.33 Terracotta seal, Kadattur (Dharmapuri district), P. B. Venkataraman.

Legend in Tamil-Brahmi *paratan*. The legend paratan may be identified either with a member of the *paratava* (fishermen) community or as the name of an individual.

4.34 Terracotta seal, Boluvampatti (Combatore district) excavations.



A lampstand flanked by tiger and bow; below the lamp is a fish. On the periphery is the legend in 7th century A.D. characters only part of which is seen - *varman*.

4.35 Bronze, R. Nagaswamy [2005].

This is a seal from Anuradhapura now in the Anuradhapura Museum, Sri Lanka. The seal carries a well-executed bull facing proper right on a well formed lotus pedestal and is flanked by lamp on stand. Above the bull are seen a parasol flanked by flywhisks, one on each side. In addition there is a crescent moon above the back of the bull representing the moon. The bull with sharp and at the same time long horns seems to be of a local breed and do not have any resemblance of either the Pallava bulls seen in several copper plates and sculptures of the Pallavas. The bull has no resemblance to the bulls found in Chola temples or other breeds found in Tamilnadu. Thus it is a local Srilanka breed.

The inscription along the rim portion of the seal is in Sanskrit and the script is in Tamil Grantha of eleventh century reading

Svasti sri srimad dvij-avasa sripati-grama vasinah
Mahesaya tad-indradi mauli rajita sasanam

This is the order of (Lord) Mahesa, who resides in the Brahmin settlement named sripatigrama and whose orders beautify the crowns (of Gods) from Indra downwards.

The seal thus belongs to the influential Siva temple in the village of Sripati grama under the (control of the) Brahmins.

Nagaswamy concludes saying that the seal was issued during the time of Rajendra's rule over Sri Lanka in the beginning of the eleventh century (to be precise A.D. 1025).

4.36 P. V. Parabrahma Sastry

The seal is in the collection of IIRNS, Nasik. The round seal contains the representation of *Varaha* or boar and above the image is the legend *Sri Ni ja ga li* in Telugu-Kannada characters ascribable to ninth century A.D. A Chalukya Chief bearing the name Nijagali figures in the Kadaluru grant of Marasimha II, the Western Ganga ruler, dated Saka 884. This chief is stated to have been a king of the Chalukya family whose daughter Jakamba was the queen of the Ganga king Ereganga II. The seal probably belongs to the Chalukya chief Nijagali. The boar symbol also supports the view.

4.37 Bronze, 7.75 gm, Palani, A. Seetharaman [2004].

Within a square, legend in two lines *Perasavarku*. The meaning of the legend is not clear. This should have served as a personal seal. Based on the palaeography we can date this seal as belonging to 7th century A.D.

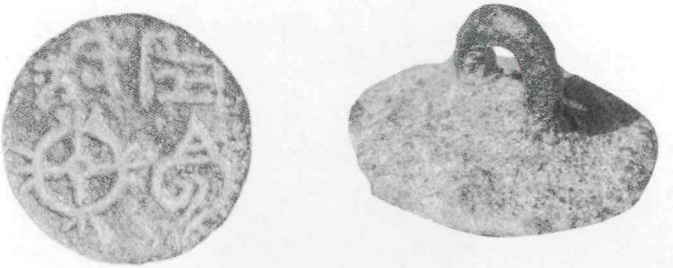
4.38 Silver, 3.9 gm,12 mm x 10 mm, Chitradurga.

The ring is broken and has a Kannada letter in 14th / 15th century character *Ha*. The ring may have served as a identity ring.

4.39 Bronze, 0.5 gm, 7 mm x 5 mm, Davangare.

Only face plate is seen which may have been part of a ring. Kannada letters in 14th / 15th century characters *Na be*. The letters in all possibility must have represented the intials of the person.

4.40 Bronze, 29.2 gm, 38 mm.



Conch and discus; Nagari legend *Javesri or Javesti* in 14th/15th century characters at the top. Although this appears to be a seal, the letters are incused from left to right. It may be the seal engraver's mistake. It is difficult to interpret the legend *Javesri* or *Javesti*.

4.41 Copper, 11 gm, 20 mm x 20 mm, Kumbakonam, A. Seetharaman [2002].

The ring which has a diameter of 14 mm, has Garuda moving, with a snake on one hand, flanked by two lampstands; above Nagari legend *Bu va na / swa sthi sri*.

Tanjore Nayaks had Garuda as their lanchana and we may assume that this was issued by them, since the find spot is in the dominion of their rule.

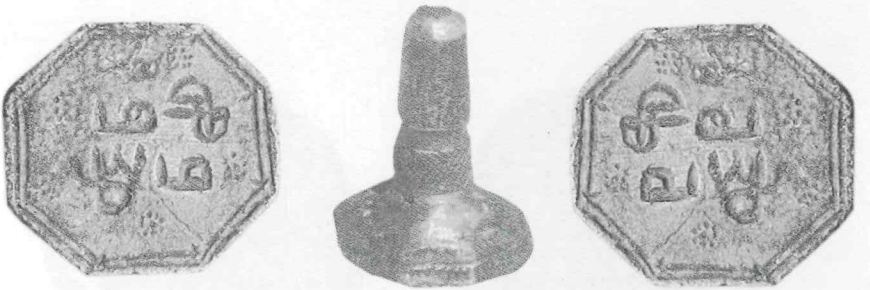
4.42 Silver, 2.75 gm, 16 mm x 12 mm, Arani, A. Seetharaman [2002].

This plate which is 1.5 mm thick, should have been part of a ring and has the Nagari legend *Krishnaji / Sambaji*. Above the legend is the sun and crescent moon. This may have served as the seal of the Maratha kings – Krishnaji and Sambaji.

4.43 Bronze, 3.0 gm, 10 mm x 12 mm, Thanjavur.

Tamil legend in 17th / 18th century characters *Sabapati Thunai;* The legend is sandwitched between two Tamil auspicious symbol.

4.44 Bronze, 14.9 gm, 20 mm x 20 mm.



The seal is fixed with a 3 mm diameter 20 mm long rod at the back to hold the seal and has the Tamil legend in 17th/18th century characters *Siva / Mayam*. There appears to be a mistake made by the seal engraver in the first letter *ma* in the second line. The second line can also be read as *charya* (if taken as Grantha characters), thus the complete legend reading *Sivacharya*. However amongst the two, *Siva mayam* appears to be appropriate. *Siva mayam* means Siva, the all pervasive.

4.45 Bronze, 1450 gm, 130 mm x 120 mm.

The seal is about 4 mm thick. Two tigers holding an ornamental circular wreath – below English legend in each of the legs *H.H. Rustam-i-Dowran, Muzaffar-ul-Mamalik, Asf Jah Mir Mahabubali, Sipah Salar, Aristu-i-Zaman, Khan Bahadur, Fateh Jung, Nizam-ud-Dowla Nizam-ul-Mulk, G.C.S.I. of, Hyderabad. Deccan.*

Persian legend within the wreath, *1285 Asaf Jah Nizam-ud-dowlah Mir Mahbubali Khan Bahadur Fateh Jung Sipah Salar Muzaffar Ali Dowran Aristu-i-Zaman.*

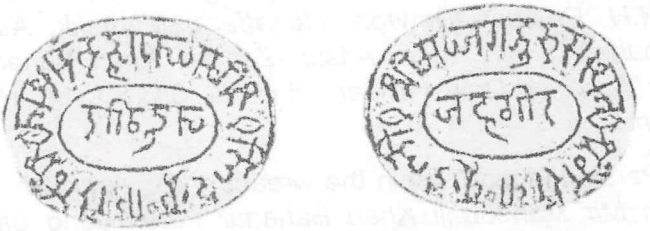
The seal is issued during the accession year of the Asaf Jahi ruler Mir Mahabub Ali Khan II, the Nizam of Hyderabad in the year A.H. 1285 corresponding to A.D. 1869. The purpose of this royal seal is not clear.

4.46 Bronze, 26.3 gm, 36 mm, Tirunelveli, A. Seetharaman [2002].

The seal is 3 mm thick. The seal has the Tamil legend in 18th century characters *Ki ra ma mu ni si pu mu th ra* in the centre and in the periphery the Tamil legend *Ve ll lla ng ku li ki ra ma Aa.tha*. The seal was thus used by the Village Munsif in Vellanguli village.

The two silver seals described below were used by the Sringeri *Matha*.

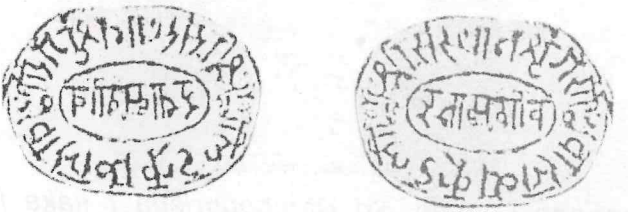
4.47 Silver, 16 gm, 35 mm x 25 mm, M. V. Lakshminarayana.



The seal is 2.5 mm thick. Nagari legend on the border *Srimaj-jagadguru Samasthana Sringeri Va Kudali*; inside legend *Jagir*.

The handle on the seal is missing.

4.48 Silver, 15.7 gm, 32 mm x 22.5 mm, M. V. Lakshminarayana.



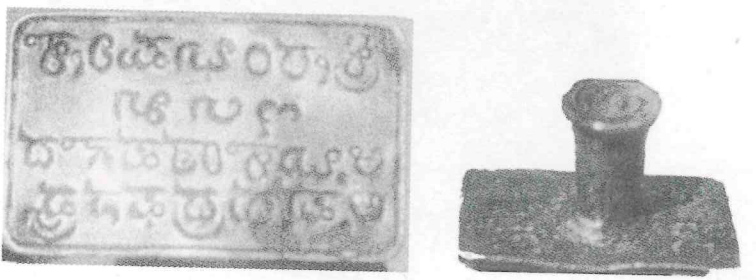
The seal is 2.5 mm thick. Nagari legend on the border *Sri Samasthanam Sringeri Vastavya Kudali*; inside legend *Inamgaon*.

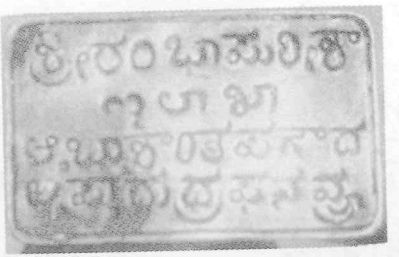
The handle on the seal is missing.

From the legend it is clear that the above two seals belong to Smartha Matha at Sringeri, originally founded by Adi Shankaracharya. Lakshminarayana says that in the official correspondence, the term *Matha* was not used instead only the word *Samasthana* was used. The Sringeri Samasthana had to correspond with the administration of villages donated to the *Matha* by various kings. The seals appear to have been extensively used as evident from the fact that the handle is missing.

Another interesting observation made by Lakshminarayana is the usage of Kudali in these seals which indicate that these seals were used by the Samasthana or by the Jagadgur while camping at Kudali *Matha*. The seal is dated c. Nineteenth-Twentieth century A.D.

4.49 Silver, 15.3 gm, 35 mm x 23 mm, Chikmagalur.





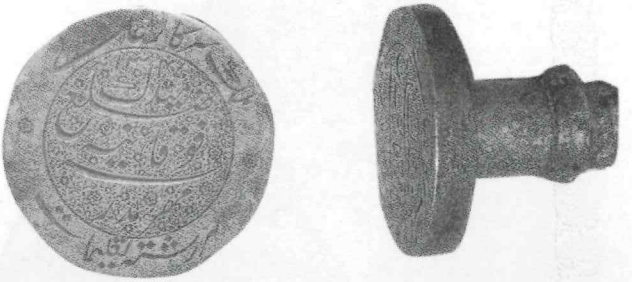
Kannada Legend *Sri Rambapurisha / ilaka / Aa.Ba. Shanthapa gowda / Aa. Pa. Rudrapanavru.*

Rambapuri *Math* is in Belehonnuru belonging to Chikmagulur district and was instituted for spreading the Veerashaivism. The seal may belong to the *Math* officials whose names are also given in the seal.

4.50 Bronze, 193.2 gm, 145 mm x 180 mm, Hyderabad.

The seal is 2 mm thick. The seal is terminated with a small plate of 25 mm long and 2.5 mm thick, being fixed to it in the middle to hold the seal. At the top of the seal is the Persian legend *Bismillahi Rahman-i-Raheem*. At the top concentric circles are the names of the Khalifas starting at 12° clock *Khalifa Shah Kadir*, *Ya Goushul Azam*, *Jalahi Hassan, Muzafar Sayeda*, *Qutubullah*, *Abdul Samad*, *Syed Ahmed*, *Ali Muhammad*, *Yaseen, Sirajuddin*, *Nooruddin, Shamsudin Saleh*, *Abdul Syed Razak*, *Moosu Janaki*, *Dawood Moosa Sani*, *Khalif Aleemulah*, *Shah Kadri*. In the concentric circle inside legend *Sanadi Moosa*, *Sanadi Abdullah*, *Sandia Hussain*, *Sandi Hassan*, *Imami Hassan*, *Abi Talib*, *Muhammad Mustafa*, *Ahyi Salam*, *Abdul Mutalib*, *Abdul Hashim*, *Sandi Abdullah*. Inside within the square *Lailaha illalahu Muhammadar rasoolallah sallallahu alyhi vasalum*; around *Abu Bakr*, *Haidar*, *Usman*, *Umar*.

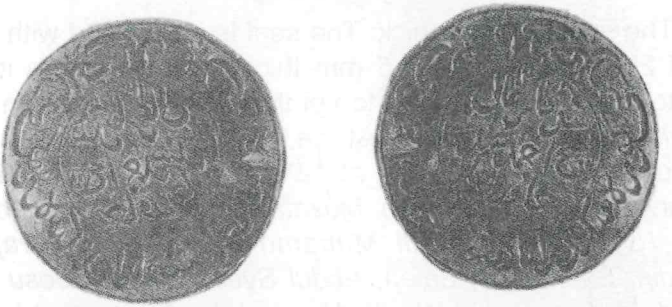
4.51 Bronze, 194 gm, 60 mm, Hyderabad.



Only the mirror image of the seal is shown above. The seal is 10 mm thick. The seal has a wooden handle and the total length with the handle is 150 mm. Inside within circle *1347 Zillay maidah Foukania Muhari Badr.* At the outer circle legends *Malik Sarkari Aali and Sir-i-Rishtay Talimat*. At the rim *H.L.H.N. / MINT / Workshops.*

Sir-i-Rishtay Talimat means stamp of educational institute. This may have served as the seal of an educational institution operating at Maidah.

4.52 Bronze, 63 gm, 45 mm, Hyderabad.



The seal is terminated to receive a wooden handle which is broken. The height of the seal without the handle is 30 mm. Inside, within circle *Sarakari Ala Sheikh Ahmad Sandi Hafiz Chasti*. Outside *Ahmadi Unani Jalali Koza Shifakana Sikandarabad.* This is the seal of a hospital/medical unit (*Shifakana*) operating at Secunderabad and providing Unani and other treatments.

4.53 Bronze, 16.7 gm, 37 mm x 32 mm, Belgaum.

The seal is fixed with a flat rod of 5 mm width and 12 mm long at the back. Within a decorated border, Nagari legend in four lines – *Shri / Vitala jan / Dev Thukara / m.*

Thukaram was the Vaishnavite saint of 17th century and an ardent devotee of the Vittala at Pandarpur.

4.54 Bronze, 13.0 gm, 30 mm x 26 mm, Belgaum.

The seal is fixed with a flat rod of 4 mm width and 10 mm long at the back. Within a decorated border, Nagari legend in three lines – *Shri / Ramakrishna / Hari.*

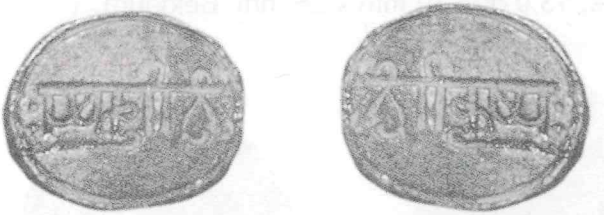
The purpose of the above two seals is not clear. These may have belonged to either a religious institution or a temple. These can be dated as belonging to 18th/19th century A.D.

4.55 Sealing on a paper document registered during 1878 during the period of Chamaraja Wadeyar (1868-1895), Mysore.

Nagari legend in four lines – *Sri Chamundi Samsya / Chamaraja Wadeyar / Dharmapaniyadatha / Bajamaniyavaru.*

The document is in the form of a roll where pages are joined together. The seal is impressed at the top of the document, at the end of the document and at every place where two pages are joined.

4.56 Copper, 9.0 gm, 18 mm x 14 mm.

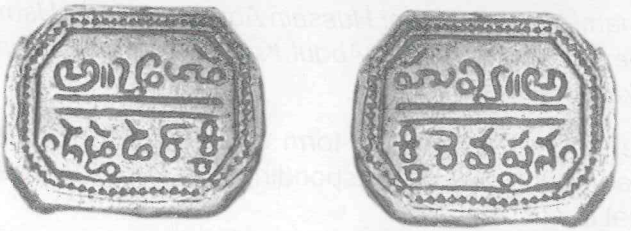


The ring which is 20 mm diameter has Nagari legend in 18th /19th century characters *Shri Krishnah.*

4.57 Silver, 1.4 gm, 16 mm x 12 mm, Thanjavur.

The plate should have been part of a ring; Nagari legend *Mukudeve / Katachala.*

4.58 Silver, 5.1 gm, 20 mm x 16 mm, Belgaum.



Within a decorated border, Kannada legend *Kavya (or Manya) Akki Revappana*. This is the personal seal of a person by name Akki Revappana. c. 19th-20th century A.D.

4.59 Bronze, 3.0 gm, 12 mm x 12 mm.

The plate should have formed part of a ring. Telugu/Kannada legend *Shri Kani / ke ve m ka / ta ba la m.*

4.60 Bronze, 16.1 gm, 59 mm x 49 mm, Hyderabad.

Legend in the inner circle *Gulam bastgeer shah Kadri 1286*. Within the circles in the periphery legend *Allah Muhammad Ali Fatima Imami Hassan Imami Hussain Abu Bakr Umar Usman Hyder* and *Haider-ud-din Mohideen Abdul Kadir Jeelani Muazam Burhan Tahir Mukaram Hussain*.

The seal which is in the form of a plate of 2 mm thickness, was issued during 1286 corresponding to A.D. 1870. The purpose of this seal is not clear.

Seals 4.61 to 4.77 represent the seals used by traders during 19th century and early 20th century. The seal is in the form of ring and carries the name of the person and some times name of the father (probably meaning &sons). Some of the seals have dates on them probably indicating the validity of the seal.

4.61 Silver, 8.6 gm, 16 mm x 12 mm, Arcot.

The diameter of the ring is 16 mm. Legend *Muhammad Qasim Phansari*. Phansari refers to a chemist.

4.62 Bronze, 7.1 gm, 16 mm x 14 mm, Hyderabad.

The ring is 20 mm x 16 mm. Legend *Hussaini Begum 1151*.

4.63 Bronze, 7.9 gm, 15 mm x 15 mm, Hyderabad.

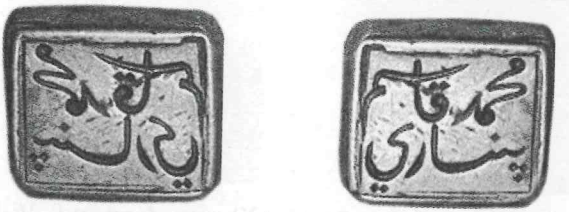
The diameter of the ring is 20 mm. Legend *Ali Hussain Syed Aaliya 1263*.

4.64 Bronze, 8.6 gm, 16 mm x 12 mm, Hyderabad.

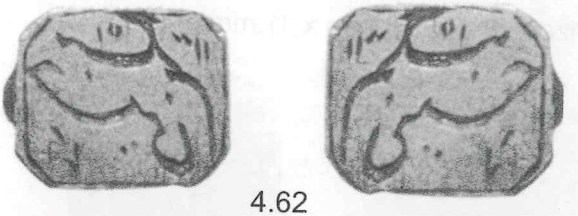
The diameter of the ring is 20 mm. Legend *Moiuddin Ahmad 1359*.

4.65 Bronze, 10.6 gm, 15 mm x 12 mm, Hyderabad.

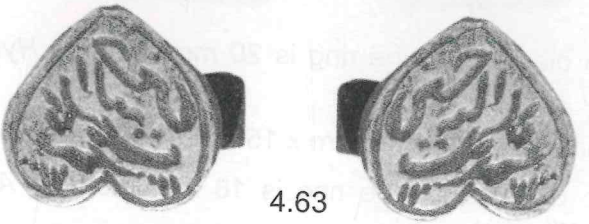
The ring is 20 mm x 15 mm. *Lakhwat sanat 1322*.



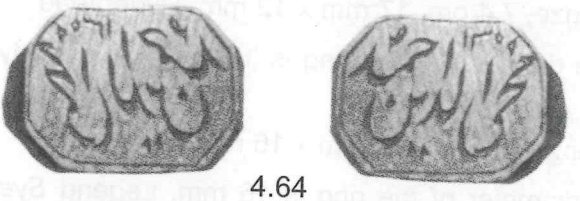
4.61



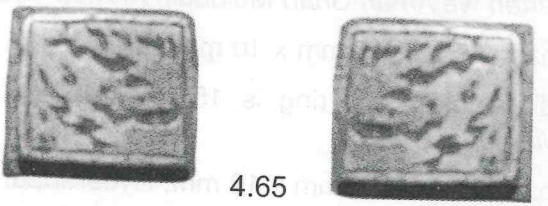
4.62



4.63

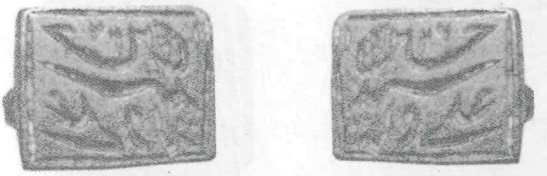


4.64



4.65

4.66 Bronze, 11.3 gm, 16 mm x 15 mm, Hyderabad.



The diameter of the ring is 20 mm. Legend *Ali Walid Syed Hussain 1326.*

4.67 Bronze, 7.8 gm, 16 mm x 11 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 20 mm. Legend *Hyder Abbas Walid Syed 1348.*

4.68 Bronze, 10.0 gm, 18 mm x 15 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 18 mm. Legend *Ali Hussain Syed Ladli Khanam.*

4.69 Bronze, 7.4 gm, 17 mm x 12 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 16 mm. Legend *Mysaur Walid Yagai.*

4.70 Bronze, 9.0 gm, 20 mm x 16 mm, Hyderabad.

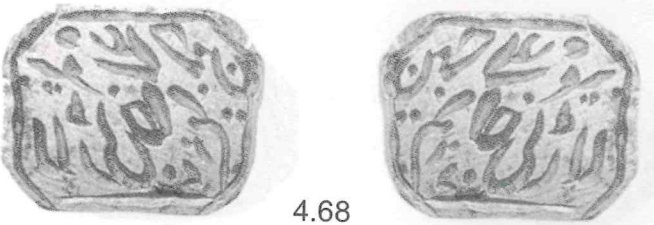
The diameter of the ring is 16 mm. Legend *Syed Faiz sab Hazrat Vabartan wa Aman Shah Moiuddin Ahmad 1332.*

4.71 Bronze, 5.5 gm, 15 mm x 10 mm, Hyderabad.

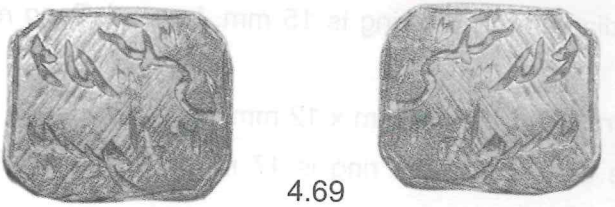
The diameter of the ring is 15 mm. Legend *Muhammad Khwaja Walid Abdul Sattar.*

4.72 Bronze, 6.7 gm, 15 mm x 12 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 16 mm. Legend *Darban Muhammad Sharafuddin.*



4.68



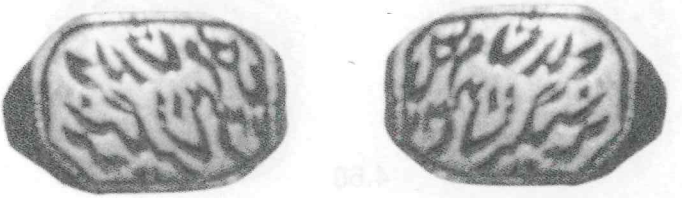
4.69

4.70

4.71

4.72

4.73 Bronze, 4.1 gm, 13 mm x 10 mm, Hyderabad.



The diameter of the ring is 15 mm. Legend *Rang rez Walid Malit.*

4.74 Bronze, 7.1 gm, 17 mm x 12 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 17 mm. Legend *Nazir Ahmad and Sons.*

4.75 Bronze, 6.3 gm, 15 mm x 13 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 18 mm. Legend *Syed Hussain Ali Nawaz 1352.*

4.76 Bronze, 9.3 gm, 17 mm x 14 mm, Hyderabad.

The diameter of the ring is 20 mm. Legend *Muhammad Ibrahim Ali Walid Imam Ali.*

4.77 Bronze, 7.1 gm, 15 mm x 13 mm, Hyderabad.

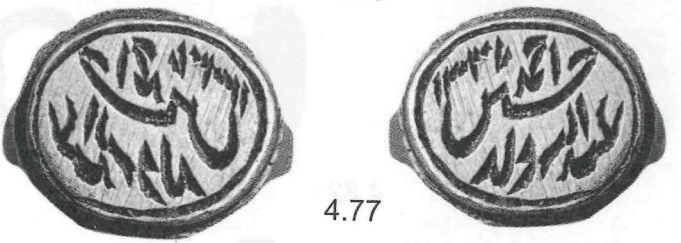
The diameter of the ring is 18 mm. Legend *Abdullah Walid Hussain Ahmad 1337.*

4.78 to 4.93 show the metallic seals that were prevalent during early 20th century, before giving way to the rubber stamps. The mirror image of the seals are shown along with the profiles to indicate the different styles adopted during the period. 4.78 and 4.79 are the ones belonging to government organizations while the rest are seals, possibly of traders. 4.92 and 4.93 are of silver and the rest are of bronze/brass.

4.74

4.75

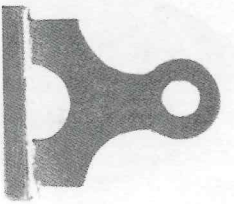
4.76



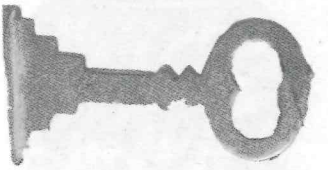
4.77

4.78

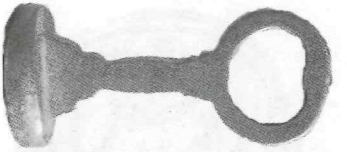
4.79



4.80

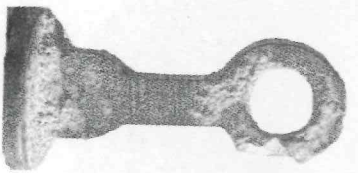


4.81



4.82

4.83



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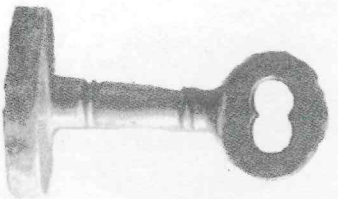

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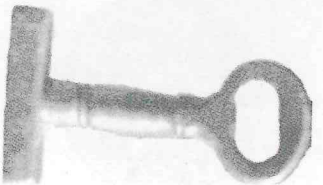

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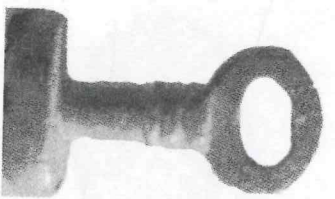

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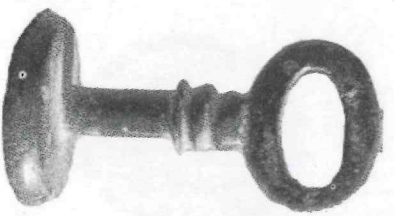

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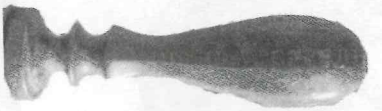

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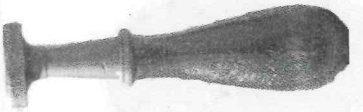
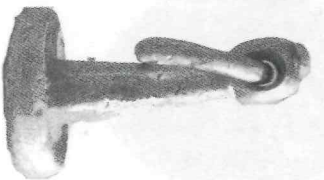
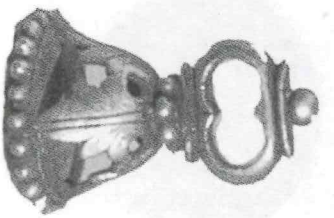


4.90

4.91



4.92



4.93

EXTRACT FROM AIN-I-AKBARI

THE ROYAL SEALS

Seals are used in the three branches of the Government; in fact every man requires them in his transactions. In the beginning of the present reign, Mauláná Maqçúd, the seal-engraver, cut in a circular form upon a surface of steel, in the *riqá'* character, the name of his Majesty and those of his illustrious ancestors up to Tímúrlang; and afterwards he cut another similar seal, in the *nasta'líq* character, only with his Majesty's name. For judicial transactions a second kind of seal was made, *mihrábí* in form, which had the following verse round the name of his Majesty—

Rástí mújib i rizá i khudást, kas nadídam kih gum shud az rah i rást.

"Uprightness is the means of pleasing God; I never saw any one lost in the straight road."

Tamkín made a new seal of the second kind; and afterwards Mauláná 'Alí Ahmad of Dihlí improved both. The round small seal goes by the (chagatái) name of *Uzuk*, and is used for *farmán i sabtís*; and the large one, into which he cut the names of the ancestors of his Majesty, was at first only used for letters to foreign kings, but now-a-days for both. For other orders a square seal is used, engraved with the words *Alláhu Akbar, jalla jalálulu*, whilst another of a peculiar stamp is used for all matters connected with the seraglio. For the seals attached to *farmáns*, another stamp is used of various forms.

Of seal-engravers I shall mention

1. *Mauláná Maqçúd of Herát*, one of the servants of Humáyún, who writes well the *riqá'* and *nasta'líq* characters. The astrolabe, globes, and various *misnars* which he made, were much admired by people of experience. The patronage of his Majesty perfected his art.

2. *Tamkín of Kábul*. He was educated in his native country, and brought his art to such a perfection, as to excite the jealousy of the preceding engraver, whom he surpassed in the *nasta'líq*.

3. *Mír Dóst of Kábul*. He cuts both the *riqá'* and *nasta'líq* characters in cornelian. He does not come up to the preceding artists. His *riqá'* is better than his *nasta'líq*. He also understands assaying.

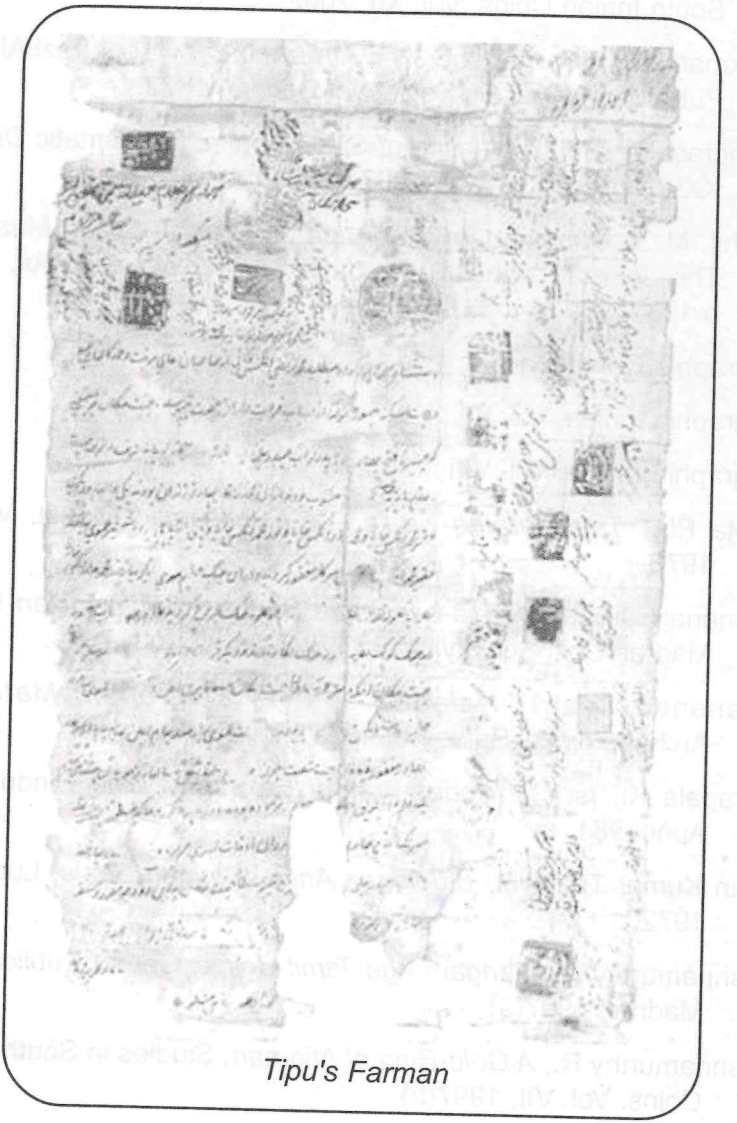
4. *Mauláná Ibráhím*. In the art of cutting cornelians he is the pupil of his brother Sharaf of Yazd. He surpasses the ancient engravers; and it is impossible to distinguish his *riqá'* and *nasta'líq* from the master pieces of the best calligraphers. He engraved the words *la'l jaláli*, or the glorious ruby, upon all imperial rubies of value.

5. *Mauláná 'Alí Ahmad* of Dihlí who, according to all calligraphers, stands unsurpassed as steel-engraver, so much so that his engravings are taken as copies. His *nasta'líq* is charming; but he writes also other characters well. He learned the trade from his father Shaikh Husain, studied the manner of Mauláná Maqçúd, and eventually surpassed all.

THE ORDER OF THE SEALS

Farmáns, *Parwánchahs*, and *Baráts*, are made into several folds beginning from the bottom. On the first fold which is less broad, at a place towards the edge where the paper is cut off, the Vakíl puts his seal; opposite to it, but a little lower, the Mushrif of the Díwán puts his seal, in such a manner that half of it goes to the second fold. Then, in like manner but a little lower, comes the seal of the Çadr. But when Shaikh 'Abdunnabí and Sultán Khwájah were *çadrs*, they used to put their seals opposite to that of the Vakíl. In the middle of that fold is the place where that person puts his seal who comes nearest in rank to the Vakíl, as Atkah Khán did at the time of Mun'im Khán, and Adham Khán. The Mír Mál, the Khán Sámán, the Parwánchí, &c., seal on the second fold, but in such a manner that a smaller part of their seals goes to the first fold. The seals of the Díwán, and the Bakhshí do not go beyond

the edge of the second fold, whilst the Díwán i juz, the Bakhshí i juz, and the Díwán i Buyútát put their seals on the third fold. The Mustaufí puts his seal on the fourth, and the Çáhib i Taujíh on the fifth fold. The seal of His Majesty is put above the *Tughrá* lines on the top of the Farmán, where the princes also put their seals in *Ta'líqahs*.



Tipu's Farman

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G.C.S.I. OF
HYDERABAD DECCAN